

THE SHOW AFTER THE SHOW: E3 '98 — FIRST PICS INSIDE!

Volume 3 • Issue 8 • July 1998

PS *Extreme*

THE UNOFFICIAL MONTHLY GUIDE TO THE PLAYSTATION



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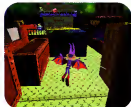
He's a revengeful little devil. And he wants payback from a mad scientist who tried to dissect him alive.



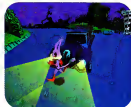
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WAR ZONE

sweat the details



GAME BOY

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A low-angle, close-up photograph of Stone Cold Steve Austin. He is shirtless, wearing a black leather vest with silver studs and a large white number '3' on the left side. His arms are raised in a victory pose, and his mouth is open in a shout. The background is a bright, overexposed white.

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Exnews: p14
Finally Final Fantasy VIII, 13 jellies, Dual Shock Stealth Launch, and ASCII dumps roll your own games.

Execute: p20
When you're hunting for the latest codes and tricks, we've got the medicine to cure ya.

Exclusive: p24
Never before seen shots of MediEvil, Heart of Darkness, Turbo Prop Racing and Nijel! What more can a gamer ask for?!

Excerpt: p34
A casual chat with Cos Lazarus, producer of Team Last RC Race: the fab new racer from Fox, Nica.

Extreme: p36
Come get some Data.

Expecting: p40
Our very special "Show After the Show" — where we show you what was at the E3 Atlanta Extravaganza!

Exrated: p52
Okay, so there's a little gore, but not much! Nothing to freak about!

Examine: p74
The total Gran Turismo blowout. We want rats. (Actually, SHE went nuts.)

Export: p78
Tail Concerto kicks some serious tail.



MediEvil rocks page 24

BPA International Membership
expired for May 4th, 1998

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Welcome to issue number 32 of PSExtreme. It's hard to believe we've already been publishing the magazine for almost three years. We were right there with the PlayStation's launch back in September of '95 and haven't looked back since. Along the way, we've had the pleasure of playing some pretty incredible and innovative PlayStation games and the torment of dredging through plenty of stinkers, too. While the software has evolved through a number of generations, so have we. With this issue, loyal readers might notice a few new names appearing in the masthead below, as well as one departure. First off, we'd like to wish a fond farewell to our long-time friend and self-proclaimed "freelance weasel", Zach Weston, who, bored with the challenge of reviewing most of the duds, missing almost every deadline and irritating many a video game editor, has chosen to cross-over and go to work for a video game publisher. He can now be found at Working Designs, far away from the teunts of the Winding boys, where he will be installing his own brand of humor into many of their RPGs. Good luck buddy. As far as the newbies are concerned, we'd like to welcome them to the staff and give you a little background on each of them: Ben Cureton — affectionately called "Rain Ben" around the office, is considered a bit of a curiosity and would be right at home at the local carnival's freak show. While rubbing most people the wrong way, Ben does have a passion for video games, can get deep down into a game's nuances like no other and is a master Tekken player (he co-wrote our Official Tekken 2 guide). Ben reviewed Azure Dreams and Bio FREAKS for this issue. Scott Freeborn — Scott is currently a senior at Sacramento State, majoring in video game playing and sleeping in. He's an ex-football and basketball player, and can bench press the entire Dimension Publishing staff. But, more importantly, he's got no hair and sports a nice hoop earring (although not as many as Chris). Thus, he's been given the obvious nickname of Mr. Clean. Scott's been playing video games since he was old enough to hit someone, and he prefers games of the sporting variety. He is, however, an excellent all-around gamer, so you can expect to get his insightful opinions on a wide variety of games. Scott reviewed FIFA World Cup and VR Golf this issue. Lastly, being the politically correct and gender-sensitive group that we are (hey), we've brought on our first female writer, Miaka Wei — Miaka is every young adult male's dream girl. She's a hard-core gamer all the way and doesn't mind if you want to spend the night playing Duke II, as long as she's the one doing the fragging. She's good at dissecting games and developing strategies, and her specialties are racing, first-person shooters, RPGs and fighting games. Miaka wrote the Ninja Exclusive as well as the strategies for Gran Turismo.

Along with the new staff additions, we have plenty of great stuff to show off this issue. We've got the goods and first hands-on exclusive of GT's Duke Nukem: Time to Kill, as well as info and shots on Sony's Ghouls and Ghosts-inspired MediEvil, and their ultra-smooth Turbo Prop Racing. In addition, we've reviewed 11 games this issue, including Road Rash 3D, K20, Azure Dreams, Granstream Saga and Jersey Devil, and have four dedicated pages of in-depth Gran Turismo strategies. Enjoy the issue, we'll see you in thirty.

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DIMENSION PUBLISHING, INC. PRESENTS

PSExtreme

Azure Dreams™

Enter
the
dream...

Take control and find your
destiny in this epic adventure
from the makers of
Suikoden and Vandal Hearts.

Capture and control monsters in your quest
to explore the Demon Tower

Learn and use explosive spells with
breathtaking graphic effects

Help build up your hometown
and attract new settlers

Maybe even find true love



1-800-896-HINT (4466) www.konami.com \$5.95 per minute charge, \$1.95 per minute support from a game counselor. Touch tone phone required. Minors must have parental permission before dialing. Hints are available 24 hours a day. Use support Monday, Friday 8:00am to 5:00pm CST only. Prices and availability subject to change. US access only. Azure Dreams is a trademark of Konami Co., Ltd. PlayStation and the PlayStation logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association. Konami is a registered trademark of Konami Co., Ltd. ©1998 Konami of America, Inc. All Rights Reserved.





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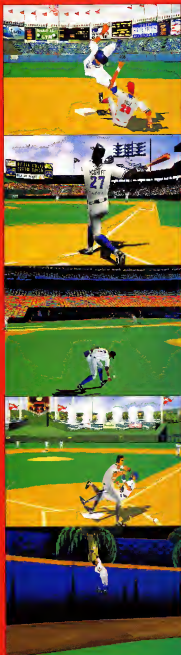
HE PITCHER KNOWS IT. THE BATTER KNOWS IT.
THE CATCHER, THE UMP AND THE FANS KNOW IT. BUT
AT 92 MPH, IT STILL HAS THE POWER TO SURPRISE.

- Bouncing home plate collisions
- Bare-handed pickups and twist
throws
- Play-by-play from Vin Scully
- Every unique pitching style and
batting stance
- Welcome to the Big Leagues



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Dear PSExtreme,

How can you seriously give NHL Face-Off '98 a 95% rating, the game is terrible, especially when you give NHL Breakaway '98 a 91%, which is way better than Face-Off '98. I hope this was just a mistake on your guys' part, because I use your magazine to decide which games to buy, but I won't even bother to buy your magazine anymore if this continues.

Sincerely pissed for
buying NHL Face-Off '98
Nick

Why do you have stock in Acclaim? Are the four points really THAT important to your life? We'd all like to win everything we play — that's probably why you like Breakaway better.

Dear PSExtreme,

OK, I've written to you guys before so I'm not gonna waste time kussin' butt. I got a couple of questions.

① In the June issue you gave Mega Man legends a 78... Was this a finished version? Because I have just checked EB's Release Schedule and the game got pushed back until September! Do you think they are going to take this time to fix the game?

② Apocalypse... It looks cool but it keeps getting pushed back. Will this game be released before Christmas?

③ In January I heard the PC Men In Black game will be ported to the PSX. It said Gremlin was the publisher and it would be released after Judge Dredd. I haven't heard anything about this game since then... Is it still in the works?

Thanks, PSExtreme Rules.
And Some other Stuff
Matt Kutza

① Good question! It was held back purely for marketing reasons. The game won't be changed one whit and our review will stand.
② Oh poor, poor, Apocalypse. It'll be out after Christmas. Whether it'll be good by then is another matter completely.
③ Have you been reading competing magazines again? You nutball!

Hello guys!

This letter comes from a faithful reader, and one who not only looks that you definitely have "THE" best PS mag in the biz, but tells everyone he knows that, as well... however.. Pitfall 3D got a BUM RAI! from you guys, it is a fun game that I enjoy playing as much as possible. Easily the best platformer released in some time.

Your worst complaint was the addition of Harry's "Nohoo" yelp before falling to his death, you said it shouldn't have been added to the game. COME ON guys, I played a sample of the game before this was added, and the difficulty was ridiculous!

I know everyone feels differently about game reviews, and I will not nor would not accuse you of bias, industry pandering, etc., etc. Please consider this... every month you run ONE review by a game player. Take the one game you got the most letters of disagreement about, choose the best player review received of that game, and print it under "EXCUSES"... readers rebuttal of a past game review.

What do you think? It would be big of you, and a lot of readers would feel included in your fine magazine.

Thanks:
Adam P' Leavelle

That's not a bad idea. We'll give it a shot. Go ahead and start sending us your EXCUSES and if we get some intelligent rebuttals, we'll do it. But, if all we get are a bunch of "that game sucks", "you're all big stupid-heads" type letters, forget about it.

Dear PSExtreme,

I am a loyal subscriber to your magazine, so I'll spare the usual paragraph of "suck-up"; suffice it to say, my hard-earned cash is safe in your game-analyzing, code-cracking hands. Fount of letters? My friend and I are hardcore Twisted Metal II fans and have played literally thousands of matches. We eventually developed a format to keep track of our records, and finally I went over the edge and had a trophy custom-made with Sweettooth's face

and Warthogs likeness mounted on it. I've enclosed said trophy photo for you. Maybe if you print this, some wanna-be "twisted" freaks out there would like to be slapped around, or steal our trophy if they can win!

Jay holds the trophy right now, but all are welcome if they think they have the skills.

Sincerely,
Gary & Jay
Upstate N.Y.



Man, y'all are some hardcore Twisted Metal II fans. Whoa. If you're this psycho over TM2, you're gonna be over the edge for SingleTrac's upcoming RougeTrip and Activision's Vigilante 8. Great, giant, green pole-cats, what kind of craziness are you going to get into then?!

Dear PSExtreme,

As a fan of RPG's since DOB, I take slight offense to the term "RPG cult" (PSExtreme, May). As Final Fantasy 7, AVAIL ARMS, Suikoden, etc., have shown, RPG's can sell hundreds of thousands, and even into the millions in the US. (as shown with the aforementioned FF7). Hardly a cult anymore! but that connotation has a worse effect, as it maintains the media's stigma that RPG's aren't for the mainstream game, but only for the darker, Magic! The Gathering- playing lops out there. I guess I'm overreacting, but there IS still that stereotype (as evidenced by that lat comic book store owner on the Simpsons). Maybe this issue has something to do with your almost immediate dismissal in your reviews of any game with even a little drop of 2-D, but most people have dismissed your magazine's reviews entirely anyway, particularly ever since your lockstare score given to Castlevania-SOTN, a true classic, though it was "only" 2-4. We do, however, buy your magazine for the great info and import looks.

BTW, I, like you guys, also think Raven is garbage, but it DOB's actually serve a purpose, by getting non-games' feet wet into the world of electronic gaming. Thanks for your time!

Yours,
NJ

We give Castlevania GOLD! Don't worry too much about the RPG Cult thing. Culti can get big. Seriously, NJ, are you really THAT concerned about what other people think about you for playing a particular type of game?

Dear PSExtreme,

I think your magazine is great, but I don't understand why you guys rate games like "ONE" 98%. I think that the game sucks. I mean, the graphics are good, but the character is like, an inch big. If the character was a little bigger like "Tombs Raider", then it would be good, or if it had, like, a "Doom" or "Duke Nukem" kind of view, then I could understand why it had such a good rating. And then there is "Castlevania". I spent money renting that game thinking it was good seeing how you rated it 90% and it sucked. I would have given it, like, 20% just for sucking. I wouldn't even waste my time reviewing it. It looks like a "Sega Genesis" kind of game, not a PlayStation game. NHL '98 is also a great game. I would like to see a decent skateboarding game for the PlayStation like "Top Skater", which is in the arcade. Then there's RPG games. RPG games suck. Enough said. Oh, one more thing. Please tell Tecmo to stop calling their games "Tecmo (blank)". It's getting pretty stupid.

PlayStation rules!
Markus Sorenson
Seattle, WA

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Tomb Raider is
now available
on PlayStation's
Greatest Hits line.

PS. Are you hiring any reviewers?

Abh, "stucking" and "ruling" — it's good to know that we finally reached the Beavis and Butt-head demographic (thank you GameFan!). The last two letters are an excellent example of the wide range of opinions we hear from our readers. Always remember, no matter what your opinion, we love you all like you were our family. We really mean that, and it makes us the number ONE PlayStation magazine!!!

Dear PSExtreme:

I'll skip the butt smooches, even though I've been a reader since issue 1, and go straight to some comments. First, what gives with your subscription offers? You give away strategy guides with new subscriptions, but when a person renews he or she gets...nothing! (apart from the best PSX magazine out there. Cops! That was mere butt-smooching!)

I can understand wanting to attract new subscribers, but what about rewarding those who continue to renew year after year? Other than our own moral standards, what is to stop us from not renewing and then sending in new subscription cards in order to get a strategy guide each year? At the very least, perhaps regular subscribers can get a discount on your guides or you can enter us into a random drawing for demo disks and other stuff you've got cluttering up your office.

Second, what is your opinion of the new Grand Theft Auto ad? (Compare the May and April issues to see what I mean). The old ad had a mixed group of juvenile delinquents including an Asian male, a Black male, two White males, and two White females (one of whom was dressed like a prostitute). Any of the 6 looked like they would be capable of stealing your car. The new ad features four White males and two White females (one grandma and one "biker babe,") who don't look particularly threatening. Was there some sort of protest against the original ad? Did ASC Games cave in to political correctness? I found it interesting that the White males ASC chose to vilify — the only group that it is okay to vilify away from Nazis and Republicans — is the same group that makes up the majority of videogame players.

Mark Androvich

Yes, the free guide offer is only valid for first time subscribers. Existing subscribers get a discount on any guide. Ten bucks instead of fifteen. Great deal. You can't get away with sending in a new sub card instead of renewing, 'cause when you expire, we still keep your name in our database. If you try to be sneaky, we put you on the List. You don't want to be on the List. Trust us. We

put SB on the List and look what happened to him!

As for the GTA ad. We think you're reading more into that ad campaign than exists. They probably just grabbed whoever was walking around the office that day.

Dear PSExtreme,

I quit.

Sincerely,
Zach Meston

Zach! Goodball! What's up with da?!! Fine then. Go off to make games if you must, you crazy, kooky cat.

Dear PSExtreme,

I don't know why I'm typing you this letter because I know it will not get printed but anyway I have a few questions for you.

① What are you going to do when the PlayStation becomes unpopular in a few years because of a new system? Are you just going to follow the next Sony system.

② Can you win the Code of the Month more than once?

③ Do you know any websites that have awesome codes just like yours?

④ **We'll deal with that issue when the time comes. We live for today, baby!**

⑤ **Yep, so far, two different people have won twice.**

⑥ **We exist in our own little world and know of no other websites, of course.**

Dear PSExtreme,

My sister calls me Puff Duddle. How can I make her stop? She's 16 and I'm only 12 years old.

Thanks,
Duddle

Just ignore her. She's only doing it to get a reaction from you. If you don't react, she'll get bored and stop.

First off let me send my congrats on your magazine, it's great, it tells me everything I need to know on games and which games to buy and games that I shouldn't even look at! Right now I'm living in Okinawa, Japan, I'm a PlayStation gamer of course, but what I'm writing about is the games that come out here first before they go to the states, and let me tell you all of the games that you said were good ARE good and the ones that you said we're not so good are just outright BAD, but there are only a few. I just recently bought the DUAL SHOCK CONTROLLER, about a

month ago, and I love it, especially on Gran Turismo, it almost shakes out of your hand. I sent my brother one and he should have a blast with it. But, besides all that, your mag is great. Please keep up the good work!

Thanks, Eric
Okinawa, Japan

Thanks for the kind words!

Dear Wackos,

I just got done reading your Volume 3 Issue 6 mag, and was looking at the top bought games. Well, I looked at the WCW Nitro line very carefully and noticed that it isn't a picture of Nitro but a picture of WCW vs the World. Please tell me what is up with that??

Thank you,
Josh

Cops. It's fixed now. Thanks.

Dear PSExtreme,

You, Dimension Publishing, are the coolest, most radical, and just plain awesomest PlayStation magazine around. I've never read better material from a group of chicken lovers before, and I really mean that. Being the avid gamer that I am, I read almost all of the gaming magazines around. Keep up the great work! Now on to my questions!

① While Kam looks incredible, is there going to be another Gex this year?

② What's up with Eric's review of Hot Shots Golf? My nationality is Japanese, but I consider myself an American and his statements seemed a little racist. Just thought I'd ask. That aside, I hope you guys keep it up, you have a subscriber for life!

Ken Murawawa
Dayton, Oh.

Thanks for the kind words!

③ **There will be another Gex, but it may not be this year.**

④ **Eric, over to you friend!**

Ken — buddy, buddy, pal. You sound like a reasonable guy — believe me when I tell you that nothing derogatory was intended, trust me. I would be the last person anyone would associate with a "racist" remark. By the way, did you hear the one about the Rabbi, Mia Farrow and the Church of Latter Day Saints?

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PlayStation Gaming News

FFVIII TO APPEAR IN JAPAN THIS WINTER, US IN '99

Get happy, kids, Square has recently announced that Final Fantasy VIII will be released in Japan this year! An amazing turn of events by anyone's reckoning, considering that FFVII took over three years to produce. Square has moved up the time table on their new game considerably; the company has in the past taken much longer to produce their Final Fantasy titles, but gamers across the globe are sure to be pleased that another installment is coming together this quickly. The time frame has been sped up considerably by the usage of the game engine from Parasite Eve.



While details about Final Fantasy VIII are on the scarce side, we can tell you that the new game features texture-mapped characters, passing over FFVII's flat-shaded poly look for a more detailed look and feel. FFVIII will retain the incredible cinematic stuff of its predecessor, and promises to be fueled full of the same amazing computer-generated full motion video clips.

While the Japanese release has been targeted for this Winter, US gamers will undoubtedly have to suffer through an extended period of waiting as the game is localized and prepped for our country (turning all that pesky Japanese into English is a long and tedious job). However, Square has promised that the translation efforts won't take nearly as long as last year's game. The company has devoted efforts to making sure that Japanese and US development are kept in synch. Just cross your fingers that the text localization isn't as spotty as FFVII...

For those eager to get an early glimpse of Square's next classic, a playable demo of FFVIII will be included in the Japanese PSX release of Brave Fencer Musashi (a cool looking game in its own right) this Summer, just as the company sneaked the demo of FFVII into Total No. 1.

IT'S LIKE A TRIP TO WILLY WONKA'S CHOCOLATE FACTORY

The amount of time, money and sheer anguish that is spent getting ready for the Electronics Entertainment Expo every year is immense, and often disgusting. Gargantuan booths, celebrity guests, system wars and huge product launches

cost companies like Sony, Electronic Arts, Eidos and Activision millions of dollars, all for a brief three-day shot of high-speed corporate wheeling and dealing, where nothing of value really gets accomplished. As you run through the floor of the show, inevitably hours behind schedule, deafened by pounding techno played at aircraft-engine levels and blinded by a stray laser beam in the cysball, it's easy to forget that E3 is fundamentally a show about toys. For three days, the Atlanta convention center (fortunately for the last time) became one of the coolest places in the Universe for a kid to be. But the folks who normally attend these shows seldom take the time to enjoy the craziness that surrounds them.

Sony has taken it upon themselves to provide some of the local youths with a free pass to nirvana. On Wednesday, May 27, the day before the show actually opened, SCEA brought a huge posse of kids to a special "PlayStation City" that they had set up in Downtown Atlanta, to let the kids experience a slice of E3. The company set up gaming competitions on a Sony Jambox, let the kids check out the newest PlayStation games and generally played the part of a benevolent host. A great idea, and an excellent way for Sony to not only reward its most important asset, but to reinforce the Sony coolness factor.

DUAL SHOCK "STEALTH" LAUNCH

File this one under "Huh?" Even though PS Extreme has been bringing you news — and even a review — of Sony's sweet Dual Shock Analog controller, SCEA kept us in the dark about its possible US release. Querying the company produced only slippery replies (what we refer to as "non-answer answers"), even as Third Party developers were telling us that their games were going to be supporting the Dual Shock. Several developers that had Dual Shock-supported games coming even told us when the new controller was due to be launched in the US, which SCEA was less than enthusiastic to confirm — odd, considering that Sony's Gran Turismo, which SCEA put a huge marketing push behind, makes such excellent use of the Dual Shock.

Despite the inexplicable silence, the Dual Shock was finally released in the US in May, hitting the retail shelves in what can only be described as a stealth launch. The controller retails for an MSRP of \$29.99, and is worth every penny.



This combination of dual analog controllers and vibrating force feedback make this one of the best video game controllers that the assembled staff at PS Extreme have ever had the pleasure to use. The Dual Shock has "bigger shoulder buttons and refined dual thumb sticks for more precise control and maneuverability," according to the back of the GT instruction manual. Just about every game company has pledged support for the new peripheral, making it one of the most widely accepted controller upgrades in recent memory. While SCEA's "speak no evil" approach to the market still has us scratching our heads, we're just happy that the company has seen fit to put it into our hands.

ASCII DUMPS DO-IT-YOURSELF GAMES

If you were scanning through all the listings of E3 titles in our June issue, you may have come across ASCII's announcement regarding their two home-built games, 3D Fighter Maker and RPG Maker. The two Maker games allow players to build and customize their own games, going into incredible levels of complexity. In Fighter Maker not only can players create their own polygonal brawlers, but all the moves, combos and specials can be designed and created in full 3D. RPG Maker lets players write their own RPG from the ground up, developing story, characters, magic, weapons, music and everything else that goes into a role playing game. After you've completed your game, you can save it on to your memory card so you can share it with your friends. Both titles are incredibly deep, and definitely not for the casual gamer. Too bad we're not going to see them... ASCII's decision comes as quite a blow to wannabe game designers, who were jazzed at the thought of creating their own adventures without having to shell out for a Yarcuse or learning how to program a computer. ASCII chalks the cancellation up to the difficulties in localization, as well as support for those trying to create a game.

PS



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COMICS

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CAPCOM

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PlayStation Gaming News

From Around The Globe

TOP 10 BEST SELLING PLAYSTATION TITLES RANKED ON UNIT SALES MARCH, 1998

1

Capcom



Resident Evil 2
Capcom
average retail price: \$50

2

EA



Triple Play 99
EA
average retail price: \$42

3

Sony



Crash Bandicoot
Sony
average retail price: \$20

4

Sony



NBA Shoot Out 98
Sony
average retail price: \$41

5

THQ



WCW Nitro
THQ
average retail price: \$43



6

EA



March Madness 98
EA
average retail price: \$42

7

EA



NASCAR 98
EA
average retail price: \$41

8

EA



Tomb Raider
EA
average retail price: \$21

9

EA



NBA Live 98
EA
average retail price: \$41

10

Sony



Twisted Metal
Sony
average retail price: \$21



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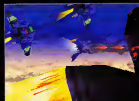
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EINHÄNDER

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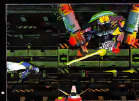
ENEMIES. BECAUSE YOU'RE GONNA

NEED THAT FIREPOWER (AND SOME

CEREBRAL AGILITY) TO KEEP ALL THOSE

MONSTROUS END BOSSES FROM

TURNING YOU INTO SPACE GARBAGE.



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A special thanks goes out to **Matt Kutza** for sending in his bag'o'codes... ya didn't win this time buddy but keep'em coming!

ASCII BIOHAZARD 2 CONTROLLER - ASCII JAPAN - \$34.95

This is another wacky one. Makes perfect sense to license a controller for a big video game; in Japan, they do it all the time (witness the review below of the Tekken 3 joystick from Hori). The only problem you run into when doing a special or specific controller is one of multipurpose. Sure, it works great for the game it was intended for, but will it work with any others? Namco was smart enough to bundle their GunCon with Time Crisis, realizing that there wasn't going to be a huge after-market demand for a peripheral that only worked with two games. ASCII's Biohazard 2 unit runs head on into that problem with the force of a runaway freight train. While the odd looking unit does work pretty well with Biohazard, the button configuration is unforgiving for any other game. If you look closely at the picture of the controller, you'll notice that it's missing a few buttons, so Capcom's other big cash cow, Street Fighter, is definitely not going to happen. The pistol grip is really nice for RE2, however, as the buttons are placed in the right positions to give you the feeling of gunning down relentless swarms of the undead. If you're looking for something to give you an edge in RE2, by all means track this baby down at your local import store (or call Network Video at 650-579-3636), but the controller is really more interesting to collectors than players.



HORI REAL ARCADE FIGHTING JOYSTICK - HORI - \$39.95

As a new option for all you hardcore Tekken-ites, Hori has brought forth the Real Arcade fighting stick for use with Tekken only. Although this stick is only made for the Japanese market, you should be able to find one in any fine import store around the country (like Network Video in Burlingame, California 650-579-3636 — yes, it's another shameless plug for our favorite import store). Anyway, the Real Arcade stick features a four button layout, a start button, and a joystick... and that's IT! Now, right off the bat, this obviously leads to some major compatibility problems. Since you only have a total of five different buttons, you can barely use the joystick for anything else BUT Tekken.

Enough about the downsides, lemme tell you about how it plays. After spending countless hours with the Hori Real Arcade stick, I found it to be quite a sufficient controller for some serious Tekkening. It was light enough to feel comfortable on my lap, but also large and sturdy enough to remain in one place. The actual joystick was great as well. Though still the "clicky" kind, it stood up to all the abuse I put forth and rarely gave me any problems during a match-up. The only big problem I found with the actual joystick portion was that it was a tad harder to do rolling motions (like down to down+forward to forward) in a quick manner. Usually it would stop in the diagonal position, leaving me with a flubbed move. The buttons were the convex (higher in the middle) style which made for some very quick button pressing. The actual spacing between the joystick and the buttons was perfect and it made the stick feel as if it was made for me only. With all these great features, you can definitely see how the Real Arcade fighting stick could become a Tekken player's best friend! Overall, the Hori Real Arcade fighting stick is a good product and a great value. It's ease of use is unparalleled and it greatly mimics the arcade feel. I recommend you go out and get one ASAP... but, only if you are a hardcore Tekken fan.



BY CHRIS KRAMER & BEN CURETON

EXCESSORY

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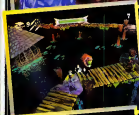
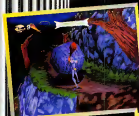
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MEDIEVIL™



Free-roaming action/adventure games have become something of a staple for the PlayStation lately, but not many of these games show as much promise as *Medievil*, which should hit the shelves this Halloween. *Medievil* is being developed by Millennium — the Euras responsible for *Frogger 3D* — and will be published in the US by Sony Computer Entertainment America.

Medievil is on obvious homage to Capcom's *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* series of games, sharing similar scenarios, monsters and weapons. The major difference is that *Medievil* is a 3D free-roaming game. Millennium has obviously taken great pains to sculpt their worlds, and the environments are gorgeous. When Sony stopped by our offices to show off the title, we were especially taken with the cathedral levels, which were filled with shattering stained glass walls, secret crypts and tons of traps and enemies. Sir Don's (the main character) got quite the arsenal of weapons to help him do in the baddies. Starting off with nothing more than a small sword, Don can find crossbows, throwing daggers, larger swords, axes, lightning rods, dubs and a chicken drumstick. Each weapon has a limited



number of uses before it evaporates, which can be a real problem if you're knee-deep in zombies. As a last resort, our hero can actually tear off his own arm and begin bashing creatures on the head with it. Not a recommended course of action of course, but it is nice to know that you've got a fall-back weapon...

The emphasis is definitely on sword-swingin', but Sony assures us that there will be a measure of puzzles and secrets to keep you going through the game. Players will need to find keys and throw switches in order to open doors and gates blocking their path. We'll be back with more later.

Chris



EXCLUSIVE



HEART OF DARKNESS

After countless delays and switching publishers, *Heart of Darkness* is finally a reality. The storyline in *HoD* has gamers playing the role of an average Joe (that actually goes by the name "Andy"). Andy has his share of problems for any young boy — his teachers apparently don't think too well of him, but he's got a boy's best friend in Whiskey. No, this game isn't about an alcoholic boy spending six weeks at the Betty Ford Center,

but rather a boy that's searching for his beloved dog. Whiskey. Oh, now we understand! The darn dog has gotten loose, and has somehow managed to find its way into a secret lair, one filled with angry demons and psychic monsters (aren't they silly). Luckily, if *HoD* or Whiskey was dog-napped by the evil forces of Darkness. Normally, this wouldn't be a problem for Andy, but he's afraid of the dark, so going after Whiskey into the "other world" is going to be scarier than he can imagine.

Now, having been in development for such a long time, the guys at Amazing Studio were able to stuff a ton of cool and semi-trusted features into *Heart of Darkness*. There are eight different levels in the game, and no two levels look the same. The design of the game, as you can see, is more of an animated type than the typical PlayStation game you're used to seeing (unless, of course, you've played games like *Broken Sword* or *Abe's Oddysee*). It's these type of graphics that make *Heart of Darkness* really jump out at you, and then when you see Andy do all of his tricks (which use over 1000 frames of animation), then you get a really get a good sense of where the developers are taking this game. For his part, Andy can jump, swing, run, climb, crawl, walk, talk, and draw gum at the same time. No, no — scratch those last couple of abilities. But if you laughed at that sentence, then you'll appreciate the sense of humor that has been put into the game.

Heart of Darkness also features a nifty soundtrack (full symphonic orchestra) that was composed by Bruce Broughton, who did the scores for the movies *Silverado* and *Miracle* on 34th Street.

Shoot, everything sounds like it's going to fall right into place, and with *Flashback* and *Out of This World* to their credit, you've got to believe that *Heart of Darkness* will continue the classic tradition. After five years in development, I guess we can wait a few more months, as Interplay has got the game scheduled for a Fall '96 release.

Eric

EXCLUSIVE



SCEA is about to get all wet with "Turbo Prop Racing". This straight-ahead power boat racing game first caught our eye at last year's E3 show and we've been hounding the folks at Sony to get more information on the title, and a playable version. Guess what? We did... and it looks like we were hyped-up for all of the right reasons! In this exclusive first look at the American version of the game, we spent some time tooling around on the first course... here's the scoop.

Turbo Prop, a product of Sony Computer Entertainment Europe, is a technological marvel. The game runs at 60 frames per second, in high resolution mode, and features five different modes of play; Time trial, Single Race, Multi-player (1-2), 3-5 Player Tournament, and Championship Mode(s). In addition,

the game is Dual Shock compatible and features six different race environments and 10 different water craft — with the ability for the player to customize each and every one.

While on the water, players must snag green, blue, yellow and red power-ups that affect craft performance. These power-ups will alter handling control, propeller type and engine performance of your craft. In now-classic PSX racing game fashion, not all of the tracks and craft are accessible at the start of play — you must earn the right, by winning races, to get the new stuff. Race environments range from the glacial fields of Alaska, to Arizona, Costa Rica, Canada, Hawaii and the sandy beaches of Miami Beach, Florida.

Those sandy beaches are what we've been playing on, as the playable demo that Sony gave us only had one track and one water craft available. The game is fast and it looks good.



EXCLUSIVE



While not as graphically pleasing as Wave Race on the N64, Turbo Prop does a real nice job of simulating water and the boats are extremely impressive. There are, including your craft, a total of 16 competitors on the water and they are looking to wax your hull.

We are expecting to see a more complete version of Turbo Prop Racing at E3. Turbo Prop has already shipped in Europe, going by the name of "Rapid Racer". The US version is lagging a little behind because of the need to translate the PAL (European TV broadcast standard) version, and its 50 frames per second animation, to NTSC (our standard in the US). The game is currently scheduled to hit retail in July, and we will be back at you with a complete editorial evaluation in the August issue of PSExtreme.

Dave



NINJA

SHADOW OF DARKNESS

What do you get when you cross an ancient Japanese story, with the flair and style of an old-school game such as Sega's *Shinobi* or Tecmo's *Ninja Gaiden*, then place it in a 3D environment? The answer is Core's *Ninja*, developed exclusively for the PlayStation.

Like Core's past titles, *Ninja* is a 3D, third-person perspective game. What's different this time around is the main character doesn't have the extra weight up front, if you know what I mean. True to its title, the player controls a mysterious ninja, by the name of Kurosawa, who must save the world from a horde of evil

demons that were released by Kotoshiki, a power hungry warlord who is out to conquer the world with the help of a demon lord, Batanako.

As the *Ninja*, the player runs through each level defeating the enemies that he/she encounters. Since the setting is in the feudal Japan era, the player will journey to volcanoes, enter deep, dark catacombs, across wind-swept beaches, into hostile villages, through rainy forests, and on an icy setting (perhaps on the top of Mt. Fuji) and, since you're up against a demon, expect to spend a little quality time in the pits of Hell. The *Ninja* travels to three worlds that encompass 14 levels and, just like all old school-style games, each level includes the good old sub-boss. Also, each location has its own distinctive enemy, which include giant crabs, ruthless samurai, skeleton warriors, nasty demons, and huge spiders.

To fight, the *Ninja* has a range of moves, from normal punching and kicking, to jobs, uppercuts and backwards flips—which are handy when trying to get away while kicking your opponents at the same time. At this time, with the version that we played, there is no way to block but, hopefully, Core will implement a block move before its release. The *Ninja* also has the ability to wield a range of weapons, which include katanas, nunchakos, daggers and, of course, throwing stars. Being attacked by all sides can get a tad bit tiring for the *Ninja*, so there are also several "magic" moves (aka "smart bomb") that can save your life in a pinch. Be thrifty though, there is a magic meter that controls how much magic is to be used.

As far as gameplay is concerned, at first *Ninja* might seem like a straightforward *Final Fight*-style beat 'em up, where your job is to just punch and kick enemies, but as you get more



EXCLUSIVE



into the game, you realize it's lightly puzzle oriented as well. There is quite a bit of old-school influence with some of the puzzles, like picking the right door to walk through, finding a key to open a gate or killing all of the enemies on-screen before a door will open. Like *Fighting Force*, Core's other beat 'em up, Ninja follows a linear path. While the game is represented in a true 3D environment, there is a direct path and sequence of events you have to go through. If you can't seem to get by obstacles, it's probably because you didn't solve the puzzle completely or beat all the enemies on screen. While the puzzles aren't super-intense, there is a bit of exploration required in order to advance.

Staying with the classic theme, there is a high-score system which rewards you by collecting treasure. There are several chests set up throughout the world which contain magic, food, and gems, while others are traps waiting to be set off. In addition to the chests, enemies drop various coins and killing bosses will get you big booty. Whatever you do, make sure there

aren't any bear traps or trip-wires guarding chests, setting off any of these can cause minute damage, but will count when your lifetime is low.

Believe it or not, Ninja was originally a Saturn release. But, like most third-party developers, Core abandoned Saturn development early on and chose to develop this title for the PlayStation — smart choice. The special effects of the game really make use of the power of the PlayStation, which is something we haven't seen much of. With the old-school flare of some of the best arcade classics, the "simple to pick up yet difficult to master" gameplay and great graphics and effects, Ninja should finally wow consumers this September. We'll have more on this title in the next few issues.

—miaka



FROM THE CREATORS OF PERSON

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RC RACER TEAM LOSI



For has quite a few PlayStation products for this year, which include their first two sports titles. *Overwatch* (discussed in this issue), an all-action Good Adventure game on that beach, the rock-looking *Alvin Ransom*, *Wipeout* (discussed in this issue) and the *Race of the Year* edition of *Excursion*, Team Losi RC Racer. Below is a conversation with the game's producer, *the* *Losi*.

FOR: Thanks for taking the time to answer a few questions about Team Losi RC Racer. The game caught our attention as something special the first time it was brought by our office and we definitely want to give it some extra attention.

LOSI: We're glad you like it, we think pretty highly of it too.

FOR: As it stands, the PlayStation's racing library is overcrowded and only a few key games become stand-out titles. What makes Team Losi RC Racer so special?

LOSI: You are certainly right about the volume of racing games on the PlayStation. However we definitely feel there is room for a unique perspective and there are many reasons why Team Losi RC Racer is special. It's a "remote controlled car" racing game and it is more of an arcade race than a simulation. Our cars are using true physics, but we also extended the capabilities of a normal RC car to include a flying mode, various special powers and numerous fantastic settings. By driving through colored gates in a particular order you can activate turbo, better tire tread, aggressive driving and a ghost mode among other things. Also, a lot of thought went into designing the many unique and varied tracks, so you can be racing around a volcano in one level and zipping through an industrial city in the next. We have 16 vehicles, all with different attributes, which are extremely fun to control. We spent a lot of time with real RC cars and with Team Losi, first tuning the handling of the vehicles so they feel and react just like real RC cars. One main stipulation in the game design was to achieve longevity with this game and go beyond what any other racing game had achieved. We accomplished this by giving the player a wide variety of vehicles with different attributes and then introduced a massive exploration component that adds a whole other dimension to the gameplay, and really sets it aside from normal racers. Add to these points the top notch and extremely diverse graphics, an assortment of cool music tracks, Two Player mode, Time Trial mode, two championship modes and a killer frame rate, and you can begin to see why Team Losi RC Racer is going to be very special.

FOR: A few of the Dimension Publishing employees here have likened RC Racer to Nintendo's *Diddy Kong Racing* while a few others tell it had a little bit of *Interplay's* original *Rock 'n' Roll Racing* and *Kitty Heavy Boy*. What were the team's influences when deciding to do a remote control racing game? Did they draw on any past racing games for some of their gameplay elements?

LOSI: Well, nobody on the team had heard anything about *Diddy Kong* until it came out about half way through the development of *RC Racer*, so it wasn't influential to us at all. When we approached the design of this game

we looked at numerous racing games to determine what elements made some of them hits and others not. Because this is one of the first racers in feature fully integrated RC cars, there wasn't much we could draw from in certain respects, but I would say the main inspirations, in terms of gameplay, were the original *SNES* Mario Kart and *Buggy Boy*.

FOR: Can you give us a little history on the team responsible for the development of the game and their background in the video game industry?

LOSI: The Development team at Gremlin is incredibly talented, with just over 80 years experience in the industry between them. Many team members have not only worked on other racing games, but also on a variety of completely different products including: *Whiplash*, *Hardcore 4X4*, *Jungle Strike*, *SNES Top Gear*, *Monster Trucks*, *Actus Soccer* and *Golf Loaded*, *Wolverine* and *Motocross* to name a few. The Lead programmer on this title is one of those "old-school" self-taught people programmers that works clean through the night and breathes model [Laughs].

FOR: Overcoming the PlayStation's limited capacity for doing 3D before mapping at high frame rates must have been a real challenge. What made you decide to do the game on the PlayStation vs. another console platform? Was the PlayStation always the first choice?

LOSI: Yes, it bloody well was a challenge! [Laughs] Well, we started this game in the early days of the release of PS1 so it was never going to be viable to consider that as a platform, and although we briefly looked at doing a Saturn version, we quickly decided against it. Besides that, the PlayStation was always first choice as the lead platform (we are doing a PC version of this game) for a number of reasons. A large part of the team had finished up *Hardcore 4X4*, which was a great learning experience for them with regards to the potential of a vehicle game on the PlayStation. The design of this game called for pushing the envelope in every aspect including graphics, audio and general flexibility, therefore the PlayStation was the obvious console choice.



GET RACIN'

FCR: RC Racer is a graphically stunning game and, from what we've experienced so far, plays just as well. You definitely succeeded in making a fast-paced, visually pleasing PSX racing game. Games that look this good usually suffer from poor frame rates. Can you explain some of the technology that went into developing the game?

Cor: Profiler was very helpful, allowing us to optimize the code and squeeze out as much power from the PlayStation as possible. The initial level designs we got down on paper were incredibly ambitious so we realized we needed a very versatile track editor. We ended up spending a year on developing something we were happy with. Also, the true physics engine was crucial in simulating the feel of real RC cars. I mentioned before the hardware lead programmer, well he was very clever in his use of the hardware geometry engine, moving as much of the time consuming mathematical functions away from the processor as he could — which is one of the reasons why it runs so fast. I'm afraid I can't reveal too many of the programming secrets, because then I'd have to kill you!

FCR: Can you give us a brief explanation about the power-up system in the game and how it works?

Cor: Although each car has its own attributes that make them best suited to particular tracks, there are a number of additional "enhancements" that can be collected. Throughout every level there is an assortment of colored gates and, by passing through them, the player will collect their color. Various color combinations will give the player a power-up, and it is even possible to obtain multiple power-ups. As the game starts with only four cars, the player will have to master all of these power-ups in order to completely unlock the game's secret levels and obtain the entire spectrum of cars. Also, on each level there is a Rainbow gate that will unlock a special feature in the level when passed through.

FCR: There are different modes of play in RC Racer, the two Championship modes where you race against other players to cross the finish line first, and the Time Attack mode, where you try for the best time around the track, but can also explore and find hidden areas. What is the idea behind the Time Attack mode? Is it best to try this mode first to gain better cars with which to race in the Championship mode?

Cor: Besides the obvious challenge of gaining the best time and then showing off to your friends, the idea behind the Time Attack mode is two pronged. Firstly, the player can race against the clock and hopefully determine which attributes each car has and then make an informed decision as to which vehicle to use on each particular track in Championship Mode. Secondly the player must fully explore the areas found in this mode to unlock all the secret bonus areas in the game. Half the game's hidden cars are found in this mode and it is incredibly hard to complete the game without finding all of these vehicles. It is a definitely advisable to test every new vehicle obtained in this mode, subsequently discovering what type of track it is best suited to. The Championship Mode is split into 4 HUBS, and as these HUBS cannot be unlocked without winning races, players will have to alternate between Time Attack/Exploration and Championship Mode.

FCR: How long has RC Racer been in development?

Cor: Just under 18 months of incredibly long days! He ha.

FCR: What does having the Team Lost license do for the

game? Is there really a huge following for RC racing out there?

Cor: It's a great benefit, as it's a "seal of approval" from the leading professionals of RC Car Racing. Team Lost were more than merely a license, and having them involved allowed us to become fully aware of how real RC cars behave and what the RC racing world was all about. They had integral input into the final outcome of the control and handling system of the game and you have to remember these guys had just about every RC Racing trophy there is, so they definitely knew their stuff. Team Lost also agreed with us that it was better not to try and develop a pure RC Car simulation, as it wouldn't have a broad enough appeal, and they were very happy with the fantasy components and the final balance of arcade and simulation elements.

We obviously want the RC Racing enthusiasts to enjoy this game but our demographic is far broader. This is a really fun game that is not only a great racer but also, probably the first vehicular adventure game on the PlayStation. I believe there is a substantial RC car culture but more importantly there are a much larger number of people that love, and still do, played around with RC cars on a more recreational level. I mean, didn't we all have one as a kid?!, in addition to these people, this game is going to appeal to general racing game fans because of the sheer number of different vehicles and the simulation of real RC car handling. In addition, our cars batteries don't die after 80 minutes.

FCR: Most racing games have a limited amount of three-to-five tracks, while it seems RC Racer has at least 15-20. How many different tracks are in the game? Is there a central design theme throughout?

Cor: It was a major stipulation in the original design to make a massive game with numerous vehicles and track choices, as we felt that many racing games suffered from the limited gameplay generated by having so few tracks. In Championship Mode 1, there are 4 Hubs, each consisting of 16 tracks throughout. The player must win the Gold Medal on each track to unlock the subsequent Hub in Championship Mode 2, the player encounters the same Hubs and the same tracks, however there are far more obstacles and a few more Bonus Areas to discover. Championship Mode 2 will not become available until the player completes Championship Mode 1. We are currently looking at including a feature that allows the player to race every track BACKWARDS, if they complete the game.

Someone described the environment graphics as Tolkien meets the Surrealist movement, which is appropriate, so I guess the central design theme is fantasy in a fun way. We wanted to add as much variety in the track design and background look as possible, and consequently we ended up with a very unique looking game. The level designs include moonlit beaches, Arctic temples, downtown cities, volcanoes, seaside resorts and "Overgrown Bushido Land", amongst others.

FCR: Is there anything else you would like to get across to our readers about the game that we haven't touched upon?

Cor: Drive fast, be aggressive, expect the unexpected, search everywhere and you'll do just fine. Oh and excuse my American during this interview, I'm from England!

FCR: Thanks and keep up the good work!

Cor: You're very welcome, it was a pleasure.



DUKE NUKEM TIME TO KILL



DUKE RAIDER

Duke Nukem is one of the biggest PC success stories over the past few years. The game, making use of 3D Realms' "Build" engine and adding a sarcastic, wise-cracking protagonist — with a healthy penchant for violence, stormed the PC Data (an industry sales tracking service) sales charts when it was released. Since then, there have been a number of expansion packs and, last year, a PlayStation game that, well, didn't do too well. Why? Our take on the matter is that it was a PC port — PlayStation people want to play new stuff — and that, as a part of an existing product that was built around dated technology, it simply didn't look as good as all of the new PlayStation games in the marketplace.



Well, GT Interactive and n-Space have seen the light and are coming back for holiday season '98 with a brand new Duke — built from the ground-up as a PlayStation product — in the form of "Duke Nukem: Time to Kill." According to n-Space's president, Erick S. Dyke, the game became theirs to do when GT Interactive's president and CEO, Ron Chaimowitz asked him what kind of game his company would produce if GT should give them a stab at the Duke license. His answer was "Duke Raider" ... and so it goes.

"HOLY COW!"

Time to Kill sports an all-new, third-person, go anywhere 3D engine that runs in the PlayStation's high resolution (512 x 240) mode. The heart and soul of this new engine is the third-person camera system. In gameplay, it works much like the system Core developed for Tomb Raider 1 & 2, but it adds an interesting, and extremely playable, new twist: the ability to zoom into first-person, "ghosting" mode, where Duke becomes transparent. This feature allows the design team to avoid all of those tricky problems that came up when your character gets stuck in a tight space. By

EXTREME

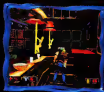
holding down the R1 button, players are able to activate this mode. In fact, Duke can even run and shoot (using a floating red laser sight as a targeting mechanism) while in this mode. This feature also pinches a little from Goldeneye when Duke uses weapons like the Gatling Gun and Buffalo Rifle, in an accurate "sniper mode".

"THAT'S GOTTA HURRY"

Camera and shooting aside, it wouldn't be Duke if there wasn't a whole lot to do and, from the time I've spent with the game so far, Time to Kill doesn't look like it will disappoint. The game plays a lot like Tomb Raider, from a character movement and exploration standpoint, with all the shooting action that the series is famous for. Duke can jump in all four directions, crouch, climb, use a jet-pack, shimmy along ledges, walk, jump and grab, duck and roll and strafe. With the ghastly camera, you can actually look and shoot in one direction while running in another! The play environments are built around a story that involves time travel. It seems that the aliens, unable to wax Duke's tail in the present day, decide to travel back in time to try and change the past and keep Duke from perforating their hides in the here and now. The game begins in New LA, in the present. Duke must fight the Aliens and find the three crystals that will activate the time portal. In the game, Duke travels to the old west, Roman and Medieval times. Of course, with time travel comes period dress; so, Duke and all of his alien buddies make a few costume changes in the game, but Duke always wears his shades and a smile.

"SUCK IT DOWN!"

In this early playable version of the game provided to us by GT Interactive, we have had a sampling of most of the level designs that will be in the

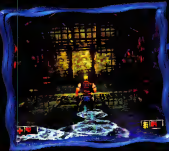
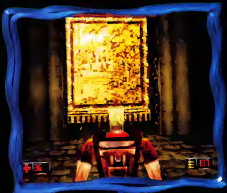




final game. Time to Kill will also feature a 2 player mode that can be played from either a horizontal or vertical split-screen perspective. Bonus levels involve shooting a set number of enemies and escaping the level before time runs out. There are also a number of boss levels, themed to each area, in arena-style combat.

The graphic design of the levels is in keeping with the dark atmosphere and sense of humor that is central to Duke's world. Among the game's many graphic features are multiple enemy death animations, including the pixel splendor found in watching a Pig Cap scurry around, engulfed in flames ("He's flaming, but in a good way!"), and over 800 different character animations.

It seems that n-Space and GT are attempting to achieve the best of both worlds with Duke Nukem: Time to Kill. By making use of the time travel plot mechanic, they have been able to give Duke some graphic variety in his combat environments—and maintain the shooting action that is at the core of the franchise. There is certainly a lot of depth in the title and the gameplay gives the player the ability to interact with almost everything that is presented in a particular level. GT and n-Space expect the game to be pretty tight by E3 and we can probably expect an early-fall release date. They've got the right idea, the execution looks good and the competition is waiting — Tamb Raider 3 is going to ship in November, sporting a new, high-res engine, MGM has got the new Band game, Sony has "Syphon Filter" (see EXpecting) and Crystal has Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver. Is Duke ready for the fight? It looks like he's prepared and that he wants some.



EXTREME



Come Get Some: Duke's History

Before stomping the stuffing out of the 3D first-person genre in big ol' combat boots, Duke Nukem began life in a much more humble fashion. Journey back with us as we peer through the mists of time to his earliest incarnations...

Our hero's first adventure was an incredible low-tech EGA game, roughly equivalent to a color Game Boy in graphics quality. Duke was tasked with taking out Dr. Proton, a mad scientist bent on ruling the world. Billed as a "Genesis-style" game, the first Duke was actually a great game for its time, which looks laughably dated at this point. The game featured dual-plane scrolling fields (wow, two levels of scrolling background!), "3D-like" backdrops, "arcade" sound effects, and enough side-scrolling action to make this game a big title for the day. Looking back at the hardware requirements for this game — a 286 computer with 3.6MB of hard drive space and 520K of RAM — is a stroll down nostalgia lane, compared to today's games that don't run on anything less than a Pentium II 300 and take more than 400MB of space on a hard drive. In comparison, Duke Nukem 1 takes up a little more space than a typical screen saver.



Duke 2 was more of the same, but required a little more horsepower from your computer to get running. A 386 processor was highly recommended, and the game took up about ten megs of storage space! In this game, Duke's facing off against a horde of alien swam intent upon draining his brain to formulate a plan to take over the earth. Duke 2 had parallax-scroll graphics (which was a big deal on the Super Nintendo), multiple weapons, digitized music and sound effects, 32 levels and tons of enemies to frag.



3D Realms waited a few years before releasing the next Duke game, and in that period of time, things changed a great deal. Side-scrolling console ripoff games were no longer cutting the mustard on the PC; Wolfenstein 3D pointed the direction that games were about to take, but it wasn't until Doom that the genre was truly realized. Tons of crappy Doom clones flooded the market, threatening to turn gamers off 3D altogether. That changed with the blitzkrieg release of Duke Nukem: Total Mayhem. The latest Duke combined non-politically correct humor, brain smashing action, incredible level design and a reasonable storyline, carving a place for itself in a genre that had been previously dominated by Doom. Duke had personality (thanks to the tons of funny voice-overs) and style; he was a real character instead of a generic faceless space marine. Duke could run, jump, duck, fly on a jetpack, shrink and freeze enemies, all while tossing off insults, taunts and one-liners... coolness personified.

There have been also been multiple "parts" of Total Mayhem onto consoles which include the PlayStation, N64, Saturn and, believe it or not, Tiger's Game Boy wannabe, Game.com. The future looks bright for Duke (that's why he wears his shades) with an all-new PC title, Duke Forever, a possible movie deal, and his own action figure line.





PSEXTREME'S SHOW AFTER THE SHOW

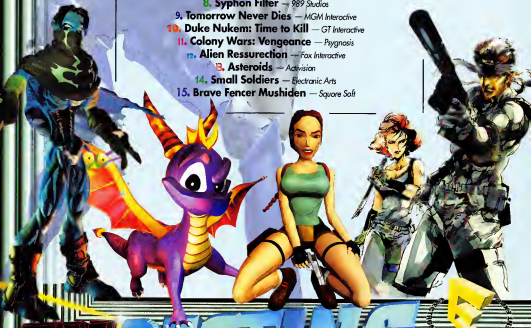
EDITORS' CHOICE TOP FIFTEEN GAMES AT E3

Qualifications for the top 15:

The games in our Top 15 list had to meet the following requirements: The game(s) had to be playable at E3. Games could have appeared in previous issues of PSExtreme, but do not qualify if they have been reviewed by our editorial staff, in the pages of EXtreme. Those that appear on the Top 15 represent a consensus opinion of the PSExtreme editors attending E3. Individual editors did not see every PlayStation product displayed at the show. Therefore, results were tabulated from the seven individual editors and the games that were consistently picked by all seven editors are the ones listed.



1. **Metal Gear Solid** — Konami
2. **Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver** — Crystal Dynamics
3. **Spyro the Dragon** — Sony/Insomniac/Universal
4. **Medieval** — Sony
5. **Silent Hill** — Konami
6. **Crash Bandicoot 3: Warped** — Sony/Namco/Universal
7. **Tomb Raider 3** — Eidos
8. **Syphon Filter** — 989 Studios
9. **Tomorrow Never Dies** — MGM Interactive
10. **Duke Nukem: Time to Kill** — GT Interactive
11. **Colony Wars: Vengeance** — Pygnosis
12. **Alien Resurrection** — Fox Interactive
13. **Asteroids** — Activision
14. **Small Soldiers** — Electronic Arts
15. **Brave Fencer Mushiden** — Square Soft



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PSEXTREME'S SHOW AFTER THE SHOW

CAPCOM

Capcom had a few surprises at the show this year, the biggest being the possibility of their much-anticipated *Generations* series receiving the "thumbs down" from Sony for an American release. We'll keep you posted on whether that's fact or fiction as soon as we can get an official confirmation. New titles on display that we didn't show last issue were **Firestik Boards '99**, **Winter '98** — A *Coal Boards*-style snowboarding game that looked a tad rough around the edges. This is one of many snowboarding games to be released this year from a multitude of publishers. **Derickstakers II**, **Fall '98** — A great-looking translation of the popular arcade fighter that should finally satisfy fighting purists. Capcom is making good and sure that there will be no missing frames of animation. Last, but certainly not least, Capcom will be re-releasing **Resident Evil 2** with new Dual Shock Analog Controller support as well as **Resident Evil Director's Cut: Special Version**, **Fall '98** — Yet another version of the original RE, except this one has brand new background music. In all now, even more difficult enhanced version and, of course, Dual Shock Analog Controller support.



ATLUS

Atlus has been very busy this past year. Besides shipping *Tactics Ogre* and their first N64 title, they've also moved into a new building and have four quality PlayStation titles due to release over the next several months. The first title scheduled to ship is **Kurtis: Summer '98** — A strategy-style RPG that promises some new gameplay elements never seen before, such as the ability to trade items via your memory card and a fight to the death in vs. mode. The game promises over 30 hours of gameplay and features character design by Yoshitaka Ameno of Final Fantasy fame. **Bomberman World**, **Fall '98** — The first Bomberman title to be developed for the PlayStation, featuring seven new characters and comes complete with Dual Shock compatibility. Bomberman World could be one of the sleeper hits of the year. **Trap Gunner**, **Fall '98** — A title Atlus has high hopes for this year. The game is sort of an evolution of the *Spy vs. Spy* series on the NES. Developed by the same folks who worked on Atlus' N64 title, *Snowboard Kids*, *Trap Gunner* combines fighting, strategy and shooting elements all wrapped up in over thirty levels, with 3D polygonal characters and battlefields. **Brigandine: Fourth Quarter**, '98 — An RPG strategy game that combines the gameplay features of *Ogre Battle* and *Oregon Force*. The game features 3D battle scenes with proportional sized characters that each have their own ending. Fun for the whole family!



MIDWAY

In addition to Midway's already impressive PlayStation line-up, there were a few last minute additions that happened right before E3. **Jackie Chan's Stuntmaster: First Quarter '98** — Midway has Jackie 'doin' what Jackie does best — fists flyin' and occasional one liners — "Are you trying to kill ME?" Jackie's Stuntmaster was another one of E3's few secrets, and was a pleasant surprise. This game is very early, and isn't scheduled to ship until early '98, but it looks as though Jackie may be worth the wait! **RC Stunt Copter**, **September** — Now here was another surprise for us. Boy, these folks at Midway are getting good at keeping quiet! This game, developed by Shiny, allows you to maneuver a radio controlled helicopter through the skies, without having to plunk down the hundreds of dollars a real one would cost. The game plays via the Dual Shock analog controller, and operates just like a real RC machine. Very cool.



EXPECTING





In addition to the great looking Fox PS titles we showcased last issue, the burgeoning company had a few more to show, such as: **Motorhead: Fall '98** — This futuristic racing game is being developed in Sweden, and is said to clock in at 50 frames per second. That's all for now, nomie info to sho. **Fox Sports Tennis: Winter '98** — For those of you that just can't have enough tennis titles, then you'll be glad

to know that you can choose from either this title or the one from Ubi Soft. Lucky day, indeed. **Fox Sports Hockey: Winter '98** — Fox is going to jump into the frozen water sports world with their new hockey title, going up against the little guys like Sony, EA Sports, and Acclaim. Oh, yeah, ESPN Digital Games (Radical Entertainment, previously the Powerplay Hockey series from Virgin) is also going to jump in with both blades forward.



Konami was showing a healthy line-up of PlayStation titles at the show, including what is probably the most anticipated game for this year — **Metal Gear Solid**. Among the buffed-out Metal Gear soldiers patrolling the booth and the exploding pyrotechnics, there were nine PS games on display in total. **Metal Gear Solid**

October — The fifth game to be published in the series and the culmination of 11 years of conceptual development, MGS is all about stealth and avoiding confrontation. The game puts you in the role of Solid Snake, who must take on his former comrades who have seized a nuclear weapons storage facility somewhere in Alaska (see last issue's Exclusive section for more details). **Silent Hill: Winter '98** — A surprise hit of the show, Silent Hill is similar to Resident Evil but without the pre-rendered backgrounds. This 3D gothic horror game puts players in the heart of an eerie mystery. The game combines an amazing 3D engine with never-before-seen camera techniques and loads of suspenseful atmosphere. **C - The Contra Adventure: August** — An all-new 3D Contra adventure that harkens back to the roots of the arcade original, while bringing it into a graphic-intensive 3D polygonal world. **Pay Day 2: September** — Expanding on last year's party game theme, PPZ delivers more stages, more items to pick up and throw, more moves and more fun. The sequel adds multi-height levels, decreased gravity levels, new power gloves that enable special throwing skills and enhanced character agility. **G-Shock: Winter '98** — In G-Shock, players take on the role of Jean Cave, a bounty hunting salvage diver who's searching for the wreck of the treasure-filled *Matilda*. Not much is known about the gameplay except that it is played-out mostly under water in wide-open and enclosed 3D areas. **Konami Sacred Fish: Winter '98** — Konami's first martial arts fighting game for the PS will have over 20 characters from which to choose, a new method of attack that allows for special "redirection" techniques, and state-of-the-art, 60 fps graphics. **International Superstar Soccer '98: July** — The follow-up to last year's successful soccer game will offer new camera angles, 40 teams, eight pre-set team strategies, five stadiums, fully adjustable gameplay speed and realistic play-by-play commentary from Tony Bubba, the BBC announcer on the UK's top TV soccer show. **Bottom of the 9th '98: July** — This year will feature an improved, arcade-style batter/pitcher interface, complete '98 opening day rosters with 800 major league players — including stars' signature batting/pitching styles, an all new GM mode, new graphic upgrades which include texture-mapped, motion-captured players and new animations, play-by-play by the Chicago White Sox's announcer, and a new Scenario Mode.

PSEXTREME'S SHOW AFTER THE SHOW

EIDOS

Eidos finally showed off *Tomb Raider 3* to their rabid fans at the show. Among the shouting and chanting going on at their booth for a chance to stand next to the busty model who was portraying Ms. Craft, there were a few new games being displayed for the PlayStation. **Vermir: First Quarter '99** — In Vermir you play one of three parasitic vermin that must invade larger host organisms and burrow through their decomposing bodies in order to survive. The game is played out in real-time 3D environments and is equal parts shooting, exploration, digging and resource management. **Warzone 2100: Third Quarter '99** — A real-time action/strategy game set on Earth in the 21st century. The goal of the game is to conquer North America and reclaim lost technologies. Warzone features sophisticated AI, a rotatable 3D landscape, detailed terrain and numerous campaigns to be fought. Last, but not least, we wanted to show the first shots of *Tomb Raider III: The Adventures of Lara Croft: Fourth Quarter '99* — This time, Lara spans the globe from the deserts of Nevada to the islands of the South Pacific. As well as the expected costume changes and new vehicles, TRIII will feature a re-vamped game engine and landscape system, improved AI for Lara's numerous enemies, amazing new weather effects including rain, snow and mist, moving water surfaces and particle systems, improved dynamic lighting, and a host of new moves which include a speed dash and a roll.



Here's a quick Crystal update: **Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver: November** — Here are some new screen shots from the game we voted as one of the top three of the show. Unfortunately, what the shots don't show you is the reason we think the game is so amazing, and that is the game's ability to "morph" from the Material Plane to the Spectral Plane (that is, the two different worlds in the game where all the action takes place). This is achieved smoothly and seamlessly, and will make you think that you're not playing a PlayStation game, but some futuristic gaming console. More on this incredible new technology in the next issue! **Gex 3: First Quarter '99** — (no shots shown) We received a nice surprise when we walked into the Crystal meeting room (some of us later than others), and that was our first look at the next Gex. The game won't be out until next January or February, but it already looks terrific, and the little Gexko will be sporting even more personality (as if that's possible). We saw him in a Captain Hook get-up, complete with eye patch and an alligator that goes "tic-tac".



MGM Interactive scaled back their previously announced PS line-up for this year, although what they did have on display was looking top-notch. For starters, *Return Fire* II has been completely scrapped and will not be making an appearance on the PlayStation. Next, *Tomorrow Never Dies* has been delayed until second quarter next year. While it's very disappointing to have to wait so long for the game, it's probably the best thing MGM could have done. The one level they had on display at the show looked great, showing a lot of Goldeneye influences and touches. With still eight months of development to go, *Black Ops*/MGM will have plenty of time to make the game awesome. The titles still on track for this year are **WarGames: Defcon 1: June** and a very promising **Try Tenk: Fall '98**.



EXPECTING



989 Studios

EXPECTING • Page 45

989 Studios made an impressive debut at E3, with a number of titles that will be shipping by the end of the year. First out of the gate is **NFL Xtreme: July '98** — As previously shown in these pages, Xtreme is 989's 5-on-5 NFL arcade-style game. We had extensive hands-on time with this one and it plays and looks great, has a lot of depth and is ready to go head-to-head with Midway's NFL blitz. **NFL Gameway '98: September '98** — The latest in the Gameway series features even more detailed polygonal players, all-new stadiums and front-end and is sporting a nice, clean, high-resolution look. Although only running on video tape, behind closed doors, Gameway '98 will be shipping soon and is looking really good — and it features Dick Enberg on the play-by-play, with Phil Simms doing the color. **Syphon Filter: November '98** — 989 Studios' answer to the Bond craze, Syphon Filter gives the player a real-time 3D environment where he can act out his secret agency fantasies. Although the textures are a little on the rough side, the game environment is compelling and the third-person gameplay should allow SF to compete with the likes of Metal Gear Solid and Tomorrow Never Dies. **NHL Face Off '98: October '98** — The latest and greatest hockey game from the folks who bring you the first two, **Coaches '98: October '98** — The popular snowboarding series gets a face lift to 512 x 240 and some very nice runs and new moves. **NCAA Gamebreaker '98: October '98** — Yeah, the graphics are better and faster and there are a truckload of improvements and new features... all well and good. But, the HUGE news with the latest college game is that they have signed KEITH JACKSON to do the play-by-play! Whoa, Kelly! It's gonna be a Dennybrook! **Bust A Groove: November '98** — Put on your dancing shoes, cuz 989 has picked up Japan's "Bust a Move" for American release. It's all here: the 80's, Disco, and that cool, flame retardant leisure suit. Check it out and see if you're a dancing machine! **Polly Cross 2: November '98** — The sequel to last year's off-road racer (the first to support analog control on the PlayStation), this is going to be a Dual Shock favorite — with new tracks, four player split-screen competition and a new 3D engine, off-road lovers will want to keep their eyes peeled. **Twisted Metal 3: November '98** — 989 takes over the TM series after a successful run with Singletree as the game's developer. New for this model year is Dual Shock support. What else? Well, we don't know. 989 was showing a video tape and it looked good, but was very early. The competition in this category is going to be pretty intense this year and we think 989 wanted to keep their cards close to the proverbial vest. Lastly, we have **The Deibolical Adventures of Tabu: November '98** — This one was pretty early, but did show some interesting flight dynamics. As Tabu, you must navigate through a number of go-anywhere 3D levels and enemies in an attempt to rescue your uncle from the clutches of the evil Emperor Hithol.



Ubi Soft
ENTERTAINMENT

Ubi Soft surprised a lot of show attendees with an amazingly strong

line-up of great-looking games. **Rayman 2: First Quarter '98** — If the PlayStation version (PC shots shown) looks half as good as the PC accelerated version, it will be amazing! Rayman has gone 3D, but the humor, action, and suspense all return. **SCARS: September '98** — Here's an arcade style driving/combat game that features nine different tracks and tons of power-ups. This game plays as great as it looks. **Shadow Banner: August '98** — This 3D shoot-'em-up game combines elements of Mech Warrior and Armored Core to make it a metal flying slugfest! There are three dynamic and vast levels in which to wreak havoc. **All Star Tennis '98: Winter '98** — We got a chance to play this game, and we had a decent amount of fun. There will be real pros in the game, but the names are being held secret, to protect the innocent, of course.

PSEXTREME'S SHOW AFTER THE SHOW

THQ
I R C

Our apologies for not getting THQ into the last issue. As you can see below, they have plenty of PS games to offer which should suit a wide variety of gamers' tastes. First off, there's **Brunswick Circuit Pro Bowling: August** — Developed by the same folks that did Ten Pin Alley (Adrenalin Ent.), this new bowling sim will

feature 13 Brunswick pro bowlers, as well as the ability to create a bowler. Game variety can be found in modes like practice, tournament, and the new Skins game. **6 Derius: Fall '98** — This new '90's version of an old-school arcade shooter offers 15 huge levels, tons of power-ups, and 3D freakin' bosses! Wow! The cool thing, though, is that the game has tons of replay value because each level can be branched off into two different paths (kinda like Doom did), so you can keep playing and trying out different scenarios! **Devil Dice: Fall '98** — THQ picked up this title from Sony Japan, and should help fill the void that all of you puzzle fans have been experiencing. The object is to use your dancing demon to line up the dice so that the numbers match, thus removing rows in order to beat the clock. **RugRats: Winter '98** — The little crumb-crunchers showed their stuff at E3, and they look just as good on your PlayStation as they do on your TV. The munchkins can interact with just about anything in the 3D environment, including slides, tables, chairs, and swings! **WCW/NO Live: Winter '98** — The latest wrestling game from THQ has 4-player simultaneous action that runs at a whopping 60 frames per second. There will be 16 featured wrestlers, plus another dozen or so Japanese characters. You will also now be able to bring chairs, pipes, and other weapons into the ring! **Cool Shao Lin: Winter '98** — Here's the first four player, simultaneous, 3D fighting game available for the PlayStation. Shao Lin, besides the usual vs. and tournament modes, will feature a Guest mode that sets the fight-or-out in RPG fashion.

ACTIVISION®

Here's a quick update on Activision's E3 line-up, which amounted to a healthy nine PlayStation games slated for this year — whoo! In addition to having playable versions of **Asteroid: Fall '98**, **Tenchu: August**, and **Fifth Element: September**, they were also showing off a totally new and redeveloped **Apocalypse: Fall '98** — which went from an internally developed game to being re-worked from scratch by Neversoft (the team responsible for converting MDK to PlayStation). The game now has you controlling Bruce (as opposed to him being your "virtual buddy") and looks very promising. They also were showing and announcing a few new PS games at the show, such as **X-Men: Spring '98** — This is the first Marvel superhero game to have the distinction of being in 3D. While the game is extremely early, the combination of high production values and a popular license could make this a great title. **Tai Fu: Fall '98** — Being developed by none other than Dreamworks Interactive, Tai Fu is an action/arcade beat-'em-up that mixes a beautiful 3D engine, detailed, cartoon-like characters with Final Fight-style game play. Not shown on the floor but unofficially announced to us was that Quake II is coming to the PlayStation, courtesy of Activision sometime early next year.



EXPECTING



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PSEXTREME'S SHOW AFTER THE SHOW



Psygnosis didn't disappoint show attendees with a slew of software that ran from freakin' awesome to just plain lousy. Over and above the titles we talked about last issue, there were plenty more on-hand at the show. **Attack of the Saucermon: First Quarter '98** — This bizarre creation puts you in the role of Ed, a bug-eyed alien that would feel right at home in Russell Ed's purpose is to save the Earth — not mutilate its cows — by setting out on a variety of missions. The game mixes 3D polygon graphics and 2D sprites to create a unique look. **Blast Radius: Fall '98** — Here's a little surprise. Blast Radius takes the amazing graphics engine and special effects of Colony Wars and mixes them with true action-arcade gameplay without the simulation aspects. Expect 40 missions set across ten different space sectors, with the ability to choose and fly nine different crafts. **The Contract: Fourth Quarter '98** — Taking the '70s theme to the action/shooter category, The Contract offers all the suspense and thrills of an action movie. In the game, you can play as one of two smooth muthas — Smo's one stone cold operator and Notash's a groovy chick out for revenge — each with their own specific set of missions and gameplay. Expect amazing 3D graphics, stealth-like gameplay and an original rockin' Acid Jazz '70s style music score. **Eliminator: Fourth Quarter '98** — A unique combination of racing, arcade and shoot-'em-up action, Eliminator throws you into a craft with a bomb strapped to it, where you must stay one step ahead of the clock if you want to survive. Expect amazing, light-sourced 3D graphics and white knuckle gameplay. **Spice Girls: Fall '98** — here's a strange little title that follows in the footsteps of PaRappa and Bust a Groove. Choose your favorite Spice and get jiggy with it! **Sentinel Returns: August** — A sequel to the popular Amiga game created back in the '80s by Geoff Crammond, SR is an abstract puzzle/strategy game that follows along the same lines as the original, except with stunning visual and sound enhancements. **Formula 1 '98: Fourth Quarter '98** — snapping back the license, Psygnosis' new F1 game will feature enhanced car dynamics and modeling, new play-by-play from two commentators, greater challenge and opponent AI, and all of the racetracks and teams from the '98 season.



Here's a few new titles not reported last issue: **Knockout Kings: Fall '98** — The new boxing title from EA Sports looked pretty sweet, and since we've been waiting for a boxing game since the 16 bit days, Knockout Kings is set to fill the void

nicely. The game includes 38 all time great boxers, including Muhammad Ali, Evander Holyfield (although his ear chewing nemesis is not to be invited), Ken Norton, Marvin Hagler, No Mas Duran, and of toothless himself, Leon Spinks. **NASCAR 99: Fall '98** — EA Sports adds some new features to their popular racing game, such as night driving at Charlotte, and the ability to race as one of the legends — Petty, Yarborough, either of the Allisons, and Parsons. There will also be 31 current drivers and 18 official tracks. **NBA Live 99: Spring '99** — The Live series gets all new facial textures for EVERY one of the NBA's players. From the demo of Antoine Walker that we saw, the face looks pretty darn real. Also on EA's list of things to improve on is a tougher computer AI on defense, and an offensive computer opponent that works with the main stars of each team.



NEWS FROM THE FLOOR

SCEA ANNOUNCEMENT SENDS EDITORS INTO "SHOCK"

The day before the show started, SCEA announced that, effective June 16, 1998, every PlayStation shipped in North America will include Sony's new Dual Shock (TM) Analog Controller. The package, carrying a suggested retail price of \$149.00, represents the first time that Sony has introduced a new peripheral into the hardware package. In addition, all new PlayStations will also come equipped with new technology dubbed "Sound Scope". Sound Scope is a little gimmick that owners of Atari's Jaguar (all five of you) will be familiar with—a visual imaging program that allows the user to generate on-screen kaleidoscope patterns while playing audio-only CD's... In a Gadda Da Vida... baby!



What can you do with it? Well, one example that Sony gives is the ability to develop real-time RPG communities by creating a character on the PlayStation, downloading the character onto your PDA for further development, then putting the advanced character back into the game! Yeah, we don't quite get it either, but we'll give you more concrete details as they become available.

989 STUDIOS IS BORN

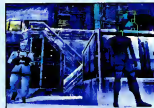
In related Sony news, Sony Interactive Studios America, the software development arm of SCEA, officially announced that it was changing its name to 989 Studios. 989/SISA has been responsible for most of Sony's best-selling sports titles, as well as franchises such as the *Twisted Metal* and *Jet Moto* series, *Rally Cross*, *Blasto*, *Warhawk* and other titles. 989's first order of business will be to finish *NFL Xtreme* for its July release date. The new pub-



lisher also has a number of new titles scheduled for release this year, both on PlayStation and PC (PlayStation titles listed here), including: *Syphon Filter*, *NFL GameDay 99*, *Twisted Metal 3*, *NCAA Gamebreaker 99*, *NHL Face Off 99*, *Cool Boarders 3*, *Cardinal Syn*, *Bust A Groove*, *Rally Cross 2*, and *The Diabolical Adventures of Tobu*.

KONAMI AND SONY BUILD "SOLID" RELATIONSHIP

In a joint announcement, Sony Computer Entertainment of America and Konami of America announced their new strategic marketing partnership for Konami's much anticipated "*Metal Gear Solid*". Although few details were released in the official press statement, it is a sure bet that the deal involves SCEA supporting the title through TV advertis-



ing dollars, as it is one of the games that will help SCEA move hardware this holiday season, much like they did with Eidos and *Tomb Raider 2* last year.

EA LOOKS FOR "MAX"IMUM EXPOSURE.

Legendary '60s pop-artist Peter Max was commissioned by EA Sports to come up with four new logos for the company. His designs were on display at the EA Sports booth and will be made use of in up-coming marketing campaigns and in future packaging of EA Sports titles. Eric Winding, our lead sports guy and art collector (his favorite piece is that one with the four dogs playing poker, it just kills him), was on-hand at a dinner in Mr. Max's honor. Apparently, Eric and the artist have developed quite a rapport, as Eric will be attending a Peter Max showing in San Francisco, in early June. While this can be considered, at the very least, an odd pairing, we believe that Mr. Max was visually dazzled by Eric's sense of style, and that his manner of dress, head to toe, all in the color Brown, was something that the artist had never before encountered.

SONY GETS PERSONAL

Sony, not content with simply "shocking" us, has yet another cool little gizmo in store for PlayStation owners early next year. The "Personal Digital Assistant" (PDA), according to SCEA, "integrates the technology of the PlayStation game console and a handheld unit into a single gaming experience." The unit is expected to retail in the US for \$30 and attaches to the PlayStation through either memory card slot. The PDA has its own CPU and its own LCD screen and can store game and personal data (meetings, notes, schedules, etc.), with the proper software. In addition, its infrared communication ability allows players to exchange game information remotely, without the need for either player to be tethered to his/her PlayStation hardware.

WHEN PEOPLE PLASTIC PANTS SURE

**ARMY
MEN 3D**

REAL COMBAT. PLASTIC MEN.



Exclusively on PlayStation from **3DO**™

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N2O: NITROUS OXIDE

PUBLISHED BY FOX INTERACTIVE — DEVELOPED BY GREMLIN



I'm tempted to merely go back to the July, 1997 issue of PS Extreme, copy the review of Virgin Interactive's Nanotek Warrior, then cut and paste N2O into it. The two games are remarkably similar in appearance, gameplay and music, with Gremlin's new shooter averaging just a bit higher in the audio/visual department, thanks in part to musical tracks from UB techno wizards — The Crystal Method and totally insane lighting effects.

Where Nanotek Warrior had a throw-away backstory (something about piloting a miniaturized ship through a microscopic world), Gremlin doesn't even really bother to justify their game. Any sort of attempt to bring story, plot, or drama to this type of game is fruitless; does anyone care why Mario chased after Donkey Kong, or just what the hell was going on in Tempest? Nope, it was all about hopping barrels and shooting spiky objects. In N2O, you're flying a very fast ship, shooting giant insects while picking up coins and power-ups. Who cares if you're trying to save the Kingdom of Zot from the evil Megabugs? The game is all about speed and reflexes, not dramatic pretensions.

In N2O, you travel through a continuously looping tunnel filled with insects. The object is to clear the tunnel of all the bugs, collecting coins and power-ups along the way. The game moves really fast, and speeds up as you advance. In

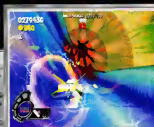
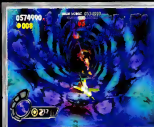
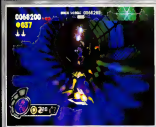


fact, you move so fast, it's hard to appreciate the visual aspects of the game. Gremlin has done things with the PlayStation that haven't been seen before: rippling water-like effects across the screen, brilliant beams of light, cycling colors and flashing dynamic lighting give N2O a rave-y feeling. All N2O is lacking are the appropriate recreational party chemicals to turn it into Trainspotting with a control pad.

There are four variants of ship design for you to choose from — Mantis, Angel, Trident, Cobra — but each of them perform almost exactly the same, with slight differences in braking and turning abilities. You move along the walls in clockwise or counter-clockwise rotations, as you shoot or avoid the oncoming enemy rushes. Your ship is equipped with a standard blaster, but your arsenal is bulked up as you fly through the special weapon pick-ups that appear



ES RATED



throughout the levels. Special weapons include bouncing bombs that fling off down the tunnel and detonate ahead of you and the fireball, which generate a huge, well, wall of fire that wipes out all the buggies in sight. Your ship is also equipped with braking rockets and a turbo booster (although I have yet to figure out why you'd need to go faster in this game), and a jump for clearing those hairy moments when you realize that you've just completely missed the bug dead ahead. Braking thrusters come in very handy for collecting coins. Every time you shoot an enemy, it turns into a spinning gold coin. Shooting the coin will double its value, three times will triple the worth, etc. At the end of each level, your coins are racked up, and you're awarded point bonuses and freebie weapons accordingly. Slowing down as you approach the coin helps you to whip off extra shots to bump up the value of the coins. The classic arcade homage is most obvious in N20's progressive enemy point totals. The most frequent units are the yellow insects, worth 100 points when you shoot them. If these insects pass you, they return as red insects, which move faster and are worth 200 points. If a red insect will then turn blue, not only moving much faster, but now fir-

ing back at you. Shooting the same type of insect consecutively will double, triple and quadruple its total value. A small display in the lower left corner of the screen shows you the last insect type hit, which helps you determine which bugs are going to be worth the most points. Other enemies include larvae-firing mosquitos, mine-dropping scorpions, web-building black widows, and larger and tougher level bosses.

This is an example of a "surface game," as in, "what you see is what you get." There are some end-level bosses and bonus levels, but there's no break or change in the relentless gameplay. N20 is tough: you go through your extra lives at nearly the same speed as the game moves. Imagine Tempest with the difficulty level set at "Make Player Cry."



It's fun, an example of the type of game that you just don't see much of anymore, but there's not much depth to the game. Flying down tunnels and blasting bugs while being visually and sonically assaulted can wear thin after a few rounds. For those of you who picked up Tempest X or Nanotek Warrior last year and just loved 'em to pieces, here's another great shooter for you to zone out on.

Chris

PS THE BOTTOM LINE EXTREME

93%

COMPATIBILITY

- 2 Players
- Analogue Controller Compatible

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ROAD RASH 3D

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY ELECTRONIC ARTS

I'll go on record right now and say it: I am an admitted, hardcore, long-time-suffering, and completely and hopelessly addicted Road Rash fiend. There, now that I've gotten that off my chest I feel much better. I've had this addiction since 1991 — which, not by coincidence, happens to be the year that the very first Road Rash came out for the Sega Genesis. Since then, I've wanted, no, needed, to play each and every version of this crazy game that was released. From Game Gear to 3DO, from Sega CD to Saturn, there hasn't been a Road Rash incarnation that I haven't gotten my greedy hands on and completely exploited until I had satisfied my need. So, when I learned that there was to be an entirely new Road Rash for the PlayStation this summer, I practically stalked the poor PR woman at Electronic Arts until she coughed up an early copy (sorry about that Erica, you can drop the restraining order now, I promise I won't follow you home anymore).

First off, I would imagine most people are going to want to know how it shapes up, and is different to, the last PlayStation Road Rash (which was pretty much a straight port of the 3DO version from a few years back). EA has gone to great lengths to create an entirely new game from scratch, while striving to retain the "flavor" that makes Road Rash, Road Rash. While they've pretty much succeeded, there are some disturbing omissions and slight problems — for me anyway — that keep Road Rash from obtaining greatness.

Let's take a look at the positives before we dwell on the negatives, shall we? For starters,



the new engine takes Road Rash into a total 3D polygon world (hence the title). Instead of sticking to the old RR standard of having five or six tracks with longer sections every time you move up a level, the developers at EA created a huge "world" that encompasses 150 kilometers of road. This world has numerous branching roads that make up a mind-boggling amount of possible routes. The graphics and data are also streamed in directly off the CD, which cuts down on load times and allow for long and varied tracks. A track, for example, might start out in a traffic-congested city than lead out into wide-open country roads. From there, you might find yourself touring through a wooded mountain pass, down into a harbor town, (complete with docked freighters) and along a scenic ocean highway. This is probably one of the features that impressed me most, each section or area of the world has its own theme or environment — from city shums to wealthy neighborhoods — heck, there's even a graveyard somewhere in there.

Secondly, in keeping with the alternative hard rock themes of the last Road Rash, EA has brought on some of Atlantic record's top rock acts for the in-game music. This year, the featured artists range from Sugar Ray and The Tea Party to CIV and Full on the Mouth. The style and theme of the music really does add to the heart-pumping, white-knuckle experience of the game and can be configured to play randomly or in the order you choose. Now, for some complaints. There are quite a few small problems with RR3D, as well as one or two biggies, that I tried in vain to overlook,



RATED



but just couldn't. First, the developers took out the "running" play mechanic completely. Once you've taken a dump on the road and skidded to a stop, there is no more running back (or forward) to retrieve your ride while hoping to avoid any oncoming bikers. Instead, once you get up from your nasty fall, your bike magically appears next to you. What? Either the developers felt that this was an unnecessary gameplay element, or they were

unable to pull it off with their new and improved graphic engine. Regardless, I wish they had left it in, or perhaps even gone one further, and let you snag someone else's bike who might have been knocked down the same time you were. Another complaint, is the fighting seems to be a bit off. It might be just me, but it seems like a lot of the time you might be hitting an opponent and you don't even know it. Maybe it's that the sound effects don't convey the solid thump you would expect when slamming some guy on the skull with a crowbar. Even more sadly, there's almost no reason whatsoever to use the kick attack. What was so cool about the last version, was the ability to kick and push an opponent into an oncoming car. In RR3D, the kick has no pushing effect at all. Yet another little complaint, but big enough for me to mention — there's no cross traffic anymore. In the last version, some of the coolest crashes would happen when an opponent would

whizz past you, perhaps whopping you once with his club, then get side-swiped by a car crossing an intersection. Then to add insult to injury, you would make sure to jump off his road-scarred body laying in the middle of the street — justice is served. Well, it's not gonna' happen in RR3D. While these might not be huge travesties, they are enough reason to keep me from giving Road Rash 3D a Gold rating.

Otherwise, the graphics are a step-up, although they tend to get a bit pixelly from time to time. There is plenty of adrenaline-filled challenge to be found, and there is a satisfying amount of cool weapons you can snag, which include clubs, crowbars, cattle prods, nuchakas, two-by-fours and chains.

There is also the additional feature of hooking up with a gang — each with their own style of ride and uniform — which will respect your presence on the road as long as you



don't mess with them.

Road Rash 3D slips a little in terms of gameplay and overall execution from the last version, which is a bummer if you're a rashing fanatic like myself. While it's still a great game, it falls a little short. If you don't mind the few problems I've pointed out above, you'll find this game to be solid fun. It's still Road Rash and that's good enough for me.

Greg

PS THE BOTTOM LINE EXTREME 88%

COMPATIBILITY

- 1 Player
- Any Controller Compatible

Road Rash 3D slips a little in terms of gameplay and overall execution from the last version, which is a bummer if you're a rashing fanatic like myself. While it's still a great game, it falls a little short. If you don't mind the few problems I've pointed out above, you'll find this game to be solid fun. It's still Road Rash and that's good enough for me.



AZURE DREAMS

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY KONAMI



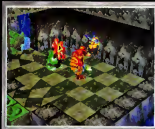
With the modest success of Suikoden, Konami brings forth another adventure for RPG fans to endure.

Gameplay is a bit slow at first. The story is a bit confusing, but eventually you learn that your father was a great monster "tamer", who has been missing for years, and you are to follow in his footsteps. Monster taming and hunting is a central part of the Monsbaya (your town) lifestyle, and only those who have reached the age of fifteen (adulthood) may enter the infamous Tower (where all the monsters are). Since no one has ever reached the top, it is obviously your duty to show the townspeople, and your family, that you are a PTP'er (Prime Time Player... sheesh) and perhaps you can find your father on the way.

For veteran FF players, it might take awhile to get used to the control interface. I often found myself confirming the wrong things, and attacking at the wrong times, but I suppose that's just a "me" thing. Also, the dialog is a bit jumbled, and I found it rather confusing at first, because I was unsure of my objective (I even had the manual!). After messing around for about thirty minutes, I finally got into the game, and that's where everything picked up. Your first time through floor one of the Tower, your little "Familiar" friend,

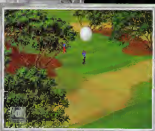


KEWNE, teaches you the basics of Tower gameplay and strategies. This cleared up the majority of my questions and thus began my quest. Along the way, you will come across monster eggs that you can hatch or take back to the city and sell. If you choose to hatch one, a Familiar will appear, and you will have the option to collar him and take him into the Tower for assistance. Familiars also have stats and the ability to power up when you kill other monsters together. If your familiar(s) lose all their health, they return to your item bag until you can replenish their energy. One of the main things I liked about Azure Dreams is the way Konami kept the exploration and battle sequences together. Because all actions are turn-based, you fight in the same screen as you explore — without having to warp to a "battle



RATED

An aerial photograph of a landscape. A river flows from the bottom left towards the center. The land is green with patches of brown, suggesting different vegetation or soil. There are several clusters of trees, some of which are dark green and dense. A small, light-colored building is visible on the left bank of the river. The overall scene is a natural, somewhat rural environment.



There are 6 different modes of play that are accessible to you when you first begin the game. These include the traditional 4 (stroke play, match play, skins, and tour) and a couple of not so traditional modes — Foursome and Fourball. In Foursome, you play with 3 other players. The foursome is split into pairs and one guy tees off. After two guys tee off, their partners hit the second shots. Then you alternate shots with your partner throughout the round. This is a pretty cool option. In Fourball, you basically are out for a "Day on the Green". It consists of you and three computer controlled guys playing a round of golf — this was a waste of time. Why would I want to play golf with three computer players unless it was a partnership thing like in

boursement, or, for that matter, a tournament? In this mode, you hit your shot and then you wait for the other clogs to hit their shots. Time was just ticking away... like sands in the hourglass! You can have commentary from either Peter Allis or John Walls, or both, if you choose to hear them both discuss how you play golf. They compliment you if you play well, but one bad shot and they pretty much lay into you. And, they don't stop talking unless you go to the options menu and make them stop. It is pretty amusing for the first few holes, and then after you've heard all of the different remarks four or five times, you want to open up a can of.... On to the gameplay. F99 99 is pretty user friendly. The power meter looks a bit different but is executed with the same concept of the traditional golf power meter. On the first hole, I sliced the ball (much like my real life golf





game). The power meter seemed to be quite forgiving. Well, at least it was until I reached the green. When you are on the green, your thumb better be quick and you better not blink. If you miss the accuracy mark on the power meter, you miss the putt. There is no forgiveness on the green. It doesn't matter if you're 30 feet away or three inches, you've got to hit the accuracy mark.

Graphically, PSG '99 is not too great. It's not bad, but, compared to the PGA series, it stinks. The golfers have a smooth motion while swinging, and the ball seems to come off the club at the time that it should, but every single club looks the same. That is, they're all irons. Choose a driver, 3 wood, or 5 wood, and guess what? It looks just like the 7 iron. And the putter? Same thing. Oh, that's NOT good. What's the deal? Also, it seemed as if all of the players looked exactly the same — except for their clothing. The cameras work real well, and the transition between frames is pretty realistic. It's almost television like in the way that the camera follows the ball to its landing destination. The sound F/X are decent. PSG '99 is far from being the perfect golf game. If you played VR Golf '97,



then you've played this game. It's almost the exact same thing, except for an additional three courses. The graphics haven't changed a lick, and all of the gameplay options, save the Random 18, are identical. The gameplay is pretty fast and it has good cam-



era transition, so it's got that going for it, which is nice, but... Whereas the PGA series and Sony Hot Shots Golf land the ball on the green, Fox Sports Golf '99 is layin' up. If you are looking for a good golf game to buy, then you'll want to go get Hot Shots Golf, as Fox Sports Golf '99 is strictly rental material.

Scott

PS THE BOTTOM LINE EXTREME 75%

COMPATIBILITY



1 to 4
Players

PSG '99 is far from being the perfect golf game, but it is a pretty decent game. Unfortunately, if you played VR Golf '97, then you've played this game. It's almost the exact same thing, except for an additional three courses... Whereas the PGA series and Sony Hot Shots Golf land the ball on the green, Fox Sports Golf '99 is layin' up. If you are looking for a good golf game to buy, then you'll want to go get Hot Shots Golf, as Fox Sports Golf '99 is strictly rental material.





that allows you to set the pace of the game. You can play six minute halves, but the clock will still count up to 45 minutes just a little faster than a normal clock would.

The biggest thing that you will notice while playing WC 98 is the speedy nature of the game. The players move fluidly and have very real control over their movements. Here is a typical scenario for you — I am using the great Argentina National Team. Batistuta has the ball and is running away from all defenders with his superb speed. A Mexican defender comes at me from the front and attempts a slide tackle. I use a ball fake, jump over the defender, maintain control of the ball, use another ball fake on the goalie, and next thing you know...
GOOOOOOOOAAAAAAAAALLLLLLLLL!!

11.17.97



Yup, pretty amazing, but can we talk

RATED



music? How about Chumba wumba? I get knocked down, but I get up again! This is my theme song as I lead Argentina to the World Cup Final. The soundtrack is great, and the sound F/X are even better. As the excitement grows in the match, so does the crowd anticipation. They are cheering, booing, and chanting their favorite chants.

The introductions are done by Desmond Lynam, the play-by-play is done by John Motson, Chris Waddle and Gary Lineker. The voices just add to the excitement. The guys in the booth let you know if you could have done better and they REALLY let you know if you have done something spectacular. Why wouldn't EA get the best guys to do the best soccer game? They had to. If you are going to try to create something real, you might as well get the real voices of international soccer. In the World Cup Classic Mode, there is a special guest commentator. I'm sure you all know him, and he really needs no introduction — the world famous Kenneth Wostenholme.

Graphically speaking, there could be a better look, however, to do this would mean messing with a very fast game. I think the speed of WC 98 is what makes me want to play more and more



pared to other EA Sports titles, like Live and Triple Play, they've nailed the AI, but haven't achieved the souped up graphics, kinda the vice versa of the others! If you are a FIFA enthusiast like I am, though, this is a game that you will want to own. So, maybe I might see you at the store when I purchase my copy of World Cup 98.

Scott

PS THE BOTTOM LINE EXTREME 93%

COMPATIBILITY

- 1 to 4 Players
- Analog Controller Compatible

Basically, EA Sports' World Cup 98 is the same game that Zach reviewed in the February issue. There is a little more enhancement of the game speed and a few more options (such as the game speed selections). The menu is very easy to use, and there are so many settings in this game that you can set it to be however you think you want to play. There is a better artificial intelligence for the computer opponent and a handicapping system has been added to make an otherwise uneven match-up a little more straight up. There's not a whole lot of room for improvement, other than graphically, for WC 98.



ROSCO MCQUEEN

PUBLISHED BY PSYGNOSIS — DEVELOPED BY SLIPPERY SNAKE STUDIO



The two words that best describe Psychosis' "Rosco McQueen: Firefighter" are "Disco" and "Inferno" — in a video game flashback that conjures up memories of first and second generation arcade games, where graphics were utilitarian and gameplay was everything. Developed by Slippery Snake Studio, Rosco McQueen casts the player in the role of an ace firefighter (Mr. McQueen) — with the goal of saving the hundreds of innocent civilians trapped inside Tower X3, headquarters of the evil Sylvester T. Square and his robotic minions. Let's get busy, before these bad dudes unleash a PlayStation backdraft!

The gameplay in Rosco is tantalizingly simple; use your axe to break down doors and attack enemies, and use your hose to put out fires... that's it! Of course, the fires get faster and hotter and the enemies get meaner as the game progresses, but the basic gameplay mechanics stay the same. There are power-ups, in the form of steel door-penetrating axes, super hoses, gas masks, food and water, that give you the ability to tackle more difficult challenges and a number of platform elements, such as floating cars in the garage levels, and laundry baskets that can bounce you over a wall and into another room on the laundry levels, that add an interesting twist to the put-out-the-fire gameplay.

The game begins in the laundry levels (there are fifteen levels in all). This first set of levels provides at least an hour of gameplay, just to get things going. The fire-starting robots release bombs that will ignite wood/card-



board boxes. As the boxes become engulfed in flames, the temperature of the room begins to rise and, if you don't put out the fire in time, the building will explode and all will perish (the good news is that the game gives you unlimited continues, allowing you to start at the beginning of the level where you went crispy). There are doors that can not be opened by your regular axe — you must get through them by finding the blue axe, allowing you to penetrate steel doors, or by finding the electrical box that controls doors with lighted floors in front of them. There is one door per area that features a red switch in front of it — you must disable the electrical box that controls this door before you can whack the switch and move into the next area. In addition, there are hostages to be rescued and they are hiding all over the place (the "Select" button gives you access to the game map screen — the map will show you where you have been but gives no object/hostage locations). Subsequent levels feature catwalks, moving walkways and platforms, bigger, badder bad guys, mechanical lifts and more.

The game really took me down memory lane. I have been wondering for some time if and when a game publisher was going to do a fire-fighting game. Every kid in America, when asked what he wants to be when he grows up, responds either "Fireman" or "Policeman". I suspect that there are quite a few of us older kids that still harbor that dream. So, it seems that this concept would be a natural — but Rosco McQueen is really the first to do it. The gameplay builds slowly... letting the player



RATED



come to grips with gameplay basics and camera performance, and then the intensity starts to build. Fires are pretty easy to fight in the beginning, but they get tougher by the time you get out of the laundry levels. Fires are breaking out all over the place — some of them tougher than others, and you must prioritize and figure out which one to fight first, or all will be lost. The pace of the game is excellent and it doesn't take long for Rosco to draw you into its addictive world of gameplay.

That being said, don't expect any technology leaps in the graphic presentation of the game. In fact, the game has been floating around in the UK for over a year (published by SCE) and it has a seriously first generation look to it. But, for me, the look is completely in keeping with the arcade-inspired gameplay and colorful, simple world of Rosco. The look is clean and simple, without a whole lot of attention paid to animation, textures and the like. It also has a very kooky sense

of humor with a campy, tongue-in-cheek voice bringing our hero to life and the mechanical voice of his sidekick, Digit, lending a helping-circuit board by telling Rosco when the area is clear, when he needs a special weapon or when he has missed a hostage. In addition, the voices of the hostages are hilarious and really help to deliver the arcade feel of the product. Not to mention the disco soundtrack that permeates the action — good and

good for you. (As an aside, I graduated from High School in 1979 — disco really sucked and we all knew it — I can't help but feel that all of you Gen X'ers are victims of a cruel, decade-long joke. Or, maybe you get it and simply don't care... party on Garth!) There are some annoying problems with the game, however — the most irritating being the way your fire hose auto-aims at the fire(s). Most of the fires contain multiple hot spots, where you want to put the fires out from top to bottom. But, the auto-sim doesn't always recognize this and you will waste a lot of precious water waiting for the hose to increase its arc and hit the high spots. The fire will continue to fuel itself and the lower spots will get hot again, until you can put the top(s) out. Also, once you make it through a red switch door you can't go back — even though you are still in the same level. If you



miss a hostage in the first area and accidentally move into the second, tough luck — he dies!

Yeah, the graphics are kind of cheesy and the game smacks of 1995 — but McQueen is fun, dammit. It has gameplay to burn, a ton of levels and an addictive quality that few games can match. Hey, Pampara the Rapper was a hit, why not Rosco McQueen: Firefighter? I'm down for it!

Dave

PS THE BOTTOM LINE EXTREME 89%

COMPATIBILITY

- 1 Player
- Analogue Controller Compatible

Yeah, the graphics are kind of cheesy and the game smacks of 1995 — but McQueen is fun, dammit. It has gameplay to burn, a ton of levels and an addictive quality that few games can match. Hey, Pampara the Rapper was a hit, why not Rosco McQueen: Firefighter? I'm down for it!



VIGILANTE 8

PUBLISHED BY ACTIVISION — DEVELOPED BY LUXOFLEX

People are sick. That's the only way to explain gamer's fascination with cars-with-guns-type games. From the controversial '80s game *Death Race 2000*, to recent titles like *Grand Theft Auto* and *Carmageddon*, this genre has been part of the pop culture collective consciousness since Mel Gibson first donned a dirty cod piece and ran scumbags off the road in a post-Apocalyptic Australia. Having grown up in beautiful Los Angeles, I can fully understand the desire to mount a big cannon to the top of a car to assist in merging on the freeway, but that still doesn't make it right. Fun, yes. But definitely not right. Okay, a lot of fun. Activision's latest entry, *Vigilante 8*, joins the pack of car combat games and attempts to distinguish itself from those that have come before. SCEA's *Twisted Metal* series took this genre and raised it to an artform. The two TM games are still amongst SCEA's best-selling titles to date, obviously hitting the right buttons with the average PlayStation owner. On the PC side, Activision's *Interstate '76* pulled down similar praise and adulation, and the company's decision to bring the I'76 franchise to the empty-million PlayStation owners was smart. But, there's really only so much you can get away with on the PlayStation, so it was painfully obvious that a lot of the game was going to have to be trimmed away to make it on the console.

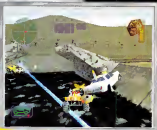
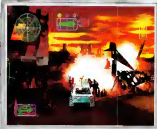
So Activision ended up pulling... everything. *Vigilante 8* lost I'76's cool music, hipster retro attitude, configurability and personality. What we're left with is basically *Twisted Metal 2* with a much better 3D engine. While *Vigilante*



8 is essentially part of the I'76 universe, there's very little cross-over. While the setting is similar, V8 lacks the fun throwback goodness that made I'76 so great. There was some attempt to include personality in the game by including voice samples for each character, but they're really poor. Hearing the same doozy phrases repeated over and over is, in my opinion, much worse than not having voices at all.

Driving controls are very much arcade style (that's fine, no one wants to play Gran Turismo auto dual). Press down on the gas and don't let up, and remember to crank on your hand-brake button for tight turns. Your default weapon is a laughably useless machinegun that does little more damage to the incoming enemies than flippin' 'em the bird — this automatic peashooter is more than enough motivation to get you rocking through the level in search of bigger weapons.

V8's wacky physics match the arcade-style play. Getting too close to an edge will usually send your vehicle tumbling end-over-end down a slope, and missile strikes will sometimes send you somersaulting through the air. There is a lot of missed collision detection in the game; I was adopting a strategy of T-boning an enemy vehicle, then staying snuggled up against the side while I fired into my helpless victim. A good portion of the time, I'd actually end up magically rolling through the other car, which screwed me up to no end. Large explosions sometimes send cars tumbling right through the walls, and you frequently get stuck on lips and edges, especially in the canyon levels. Despite troubles with the physics, the 3D engine running *Vigilante 8* is downright beautiful.



RAITED



SingleTrac games drive me crazy because they don't really feel 3D; all their characters and objects look flat, like two-dimensional Colorforms moving through space. Vigilante 8 is a lot more realistic, with fully 3D cars and environments, as well as some nice graphical touches like brilliant explosions and lensflares when you face into the sun. And, even with the clean graphics and polygonal environments, V8 is a fast game with a very respectable frame rate.

Just like TM2, there are special fighting game-type moves for each vehicle and weapon. Oddly enough, special moves (usually along the lines of up, up, down and B2) cannot be performed on the analog controller; you have to actually enter them on the D-pad. So you have to take your hand off of your driving stick, move up to the D-pad, enter the combo, then grab the controller again. This is not conducive to auto combat, as the car you intended to shoot will usually move out of your way before you can complete the combo.

In Quest mode, you choose from one of the 8 available characters and drive through a bunch of missions. Each character has their own agenda, whether good or bad, but play through the same levels with slightly different mission objectives (protect oil rigs, destroy oil rigs, protect gas station, destroy gas station). You don't have to finish the objective to end the level, simply destroying all the other cars will move you along. The levels are nicely built and have some cool features and triggered events. I really liked the ability to ride the chair lift on the snow level and riding the blimp in the casino level.

Power-ups effect the tide of battle, especially when you don't have any. You begin most of the missions armed with your teeny machine-gun, while the enemy vehicles (naturally) are armed to the teeth. You have to scramble to find any sort of weapon you can. Meanwhile, the other cars begin peppering you with all sorts of missiles, rockets and cannon fire. The single most irritating thing about the power-

ups in V8 is that they can hit you from literally anywhere. Projectiles will come out of nowhere and smack into you, with absolutely no way to avoid them. Most of the missiles can be outrun, but lord help you if the other cars get their special weapons. The specials can hit from anywhere on the level, you don't even need to be near the car. Slick Clyde can fire a bolt of lightning that will hit almost every time and do massive amounts of damage.

Now, kids, firing radar guided missiles from your car is wrong, remember that. Please don't strap an Uz4 to the hood of your Mom's minivan and go wild in your local mall parking garage. If you really need to confront these types of feelings, check out Vigilante 8. While I was impressed with the technology underneath this game, I was a bit disappointed with



its repetitious "me too" design that I've seen a few times before. If the V8 team had been able to save a little of the funk and 'tude from I76, this game might have been more impressive, but I'm personally more interested in seeing how SISA's TMS and SingleTrac's Rogue Trip turn out. We are ultimately left with a very good-looking TM2 clone that has its share of faults, but still is a decent amount of fun.

Chris

PS THE BOTTOM LINE EXTREME 84%

COMPATIBILITY



While I was impressed with the technology underneath this game, I was generally bored with its repetitious "me too" design that I've seen a few times before. If the V8 team had been able to save a little of the funk and 'tude from I76, this game might have been more impressive, but I'm personally more interested in seeing how SISA's TMS and SingleTrac's Rogue Trip turn out.



BIO F.R.E.A.K.S.

PUBLISHED BY MIDWAY — DEVELOPED BY SAPPHERE



"It's deja-vu all over again." I say that after just completing this exact review for our sister publication Q64. Since both versions are almost identical, I'm gonna tell you what I told our Q64 readers. With gamers highly disappointed with Wargods as well as MK4 Arcade, Midway tried to go in a new direction and provide us fighting/mech battle game players with a new all-out, battle-style game. Bio FREAKS (which stands for Flying Robotic Enhanced Armored Killing Synthoids) was reportedly developed for the arcade, but those plans were scrapped and Midway opted for a direct home version instead. Converted by Sapphire, it boasts total 3-dimensional combat with all the blood and guts of an MK game. The initial concept is quite good but, after spending quite a bit of time playing, the game left me with a bitter taste in my mouth (maybe it's that week-old piece of Juicy Fruit — just a thought -ed.).

Bio FREAKS' controls are very straightforward. Left Punch, Right Punch, Left Kick, and Right Kick are your primary attack options. Also included is a fire button, for using your arm-mounted weapon, and a thrust button for shooting up into the air. The wing buttons are used for dodging on the ground and for hovering sideways while airborne. Double tapping forward on the controller makes your character quickly lunge at an opponent, which is perfect for gaining the advantage after a knockdown. By performing



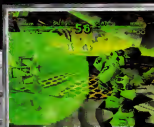
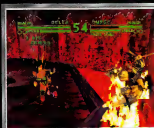
special controller and button combinations, you can make your character do some pretty potent attacks and maneuvers. In addition to special moves, each character has a few button link combinations moves that are performed by pressing a predetermined order of punch/kick buttons at the right intervals — typical fighting game fare.

There are a total of eight bizarre characters to choose from when you start up Bio FREAKS, each with a large variety of special moves and attacks. Like most fighting games these days, there are also a number of gameplay modes. Arcade Mode is basic one-on-one fighting against a human or CPU opponent. VS Mode is one-on-one competition, which also keeps track of wins and losses. Team Battle Mode lets you select a team of characters and put them up against a random opposing CPU or human team. Survival Mode is for proving your endurance against a never-ending series of CPU opponent battles. Of course, I can't forget Practice Mode, which lets you hone your combat and strategies against a CPU punching bag.

As when I reviewed the N64 version, once I got into a real battle, I immediately started fooling around with dashes and side-steps and realized that you cannot walk back and dodge simultaneously. At first this doesn't seem like such a big deal but, when you back-dash to avoid a strike attack, then your opponent fires their weapon, you often find yourself confined to the back dash with no hope of mov-



RATED



ing laterally. Next, I tried to hover, strafe and dash, all while trying to input commands to perform an aerial attack. Unfortunately, the meager control interface wouldn't allow for such complex tactics, therefore harming and diminishing the replay value. Also, due to the semi-lax handling ability of each fighter, it was often hard to land my character back on a platform after going to the air. Many times I found myself falling right into a pit of slime and taking some unnecessary damage — ahrrgh!

As an added bonus in the options menu, you can turn on the Game Hints feature for some in-game help. With Game Hints activated, you will be presented with playing tips during your battles — a great addition to aid beginners. One of the main things that irked me about the Options Mode was the absence of a "bout number" selection. Usually, when I play a fighter at home, I like to have the option to set the rounds on best-of-five or even higher, so matches last longer and allow additional time to learn gameplay tricks and strategies before having to select the character again. Besides that minor deficiency, you can change the timer, gore, and continues within options mode to better suit your gaming desires.

The visual package the PSX version of Bio FREAKS provides is a tad better than the N64 version. When dashing around to attack, and especially during flying maneuvers, the character animation was poor (in the N64 version), and it sometimes left me wondering what the heck was going on. On the contrary, I found the character art and overall look of the PSX game to be quite pleasing. The backgrounds were very creative and the VS screen illustrations showed some cool originality. It's refreshing to see that,

in times like these, companies can still come up with unique characters for their games, instead of modifying an already played out idea (i.e. Ryu clones). The muffled sound effects and overall poor music makes "hearing" Bio FREAKS a chore indeed. Not only did I utterly abhor the choice of sound effects used for hits and strikes, but the special move effects were downright pathetic. The only audio tidbit I actually enjoyed was when the crowd kicked in after I performed a long button link combination on my opponent. On the bright side, navigating the menu and option screens was quite pleasing, but obviously that is irrelevant. Basically, the sounds were off-point and really didn't sound like they fit in at all.



Overall, Bio FREAKS is a good idea lacking sufficient support. I very much enjoyed the Bio FREAK world but I also found myself wishing I could sit down and have a good talk with the designers — pointing out where they went wrong. To the majority of gamers out there, you'll probably find this title as a disappointing rental or, even worse, a bad purchase.

Ben

PS THE BOTTOM LINE EXTREME 65%

COMPATIBILITY

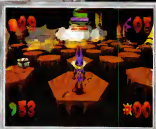
1 or 2 Players

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JERSEY DEVIL

PUBLISHED BY SONY — DEVELOPED BY BEHAVIOR



It's hard living in the shadow of an older sibling (God knows how Mark and Eric have dealt with JD) — most of the firsts, victories and successes have already been achieved, so it makes it a little more difficult for the younger members of the family to gain their independence and establish their own identities. Of course, this doesn't mean that they are any less successful, just that they have to work harder to prove who they are.

Such is the case in the SCEA family right now: when it comes to character-based action/platform games, the company has given birth to one Golden (or "Platinum") child after another. First there was Crash Bandicoot, then Crash 2 ("And this is my other brother Darryl"), followed by the birth of their space-age hermano, Blasto. Each of these titles has proven its worth in the consumer marketplace, so following in their footsteps is a gigantic task, indeed.

And so "Jersey Devil" is born. For those of you that loyally read PSXtreme every month, you probably know two things about me: I enjoy a good A/P and that, over the past few months, I have found my affection growing for SCEA's little Devil. Obviously, JD is coming into an increasingly crowded field, with the titles mentioned above, and GEX: Enter the Gecko and Croc: Legend of the Gobbos also lining retailer shelves. Not to mention the fact that Spyro the Dragon, Crash 3, Akuji the Heartless, Croc 2 and GEX 3 are all scheduled to make an appearance before year's end — that's a lot of jumping, tail-whipping and butt-bouncing! How does JD fit into the mix? Quite comfortably, thank you!

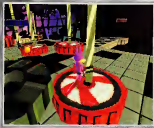
There are many reasons why JD is not a Platinum game, we'll get into those later — but I can't get away from the simple truth: Jersey Devil is FUN! But that isn't all... it also has solid technology, great level design, funny, interesting enemies AND the game is absolutely HUGE. Let's get into the details.

I'm going to assume you know the story by now, 'cause we've already done it and we've got too much else to cover. You begin your

life as JD in the city's town square, at night. The first area that opens up to you is the Museum, with the "Museum Madness" level. In it, you come to grips with all you need to know about JD's moves and character control. There are three different objectives you have in any given level: collect the colored "K-W-A-R-F" coins that unlock doors to different sub-levels within the level, rescue the hostages (there are a total of 32 in the game, some sub-levels contain hostages, others do not) and break all of the light blue "K" boxes. In order to successfully accomplish these tasks, you must jump, tail-whip, duck, spread your bat wings and glide, climb and punch your way past enemies, objects, ropes, traps, doors, etc.

Museum Madness features a number of different sub-levels and your first encounter with one of Dr. Knarf's minion-bosses, Pumpkinhead. The jumping and gliding action in this first main level, and all of its sub-levels, is unique and very intuitive. Although each sub-level presents its own unique challenges, you should be able to attack them with a level of confidence and find yourself moving through Museum Madness like a hot knife through butter. After beating Pumpkinhead, you will be treated to a real-time intermission back at town square, where you are given a clue as to your next assignment. In addition, by beating Museum Madness, you have opened up another level in the Museum area, "Dome Home". Although I have been playing JD, off and on, for the past nine months, I found myself immediately engrossed in

4.5 RATED



the game and, before I knew it, three hours had passed and I had completed 25% of it. I wasn't losing time and lives, either. I felt like I was making pretty quick progress — that's how large the game is. And it offers a number of incentives for going back into sub-levels and playing them again. JD has a "Power Level" rating that is tied to your ability to find all of the light blue boxes in a particular sub-level. There are big steel doors in some levels that have a power number on them. If you have the required rating, then you can go through that door and on to more new stuff... cool!

And it isn't just size that matters, either: JD runs at 30 frames per second, in the PlayStation's high-resolution mode. The cartoon-style graphics and character animation really make for a unique look to the game. Although not as polished as Crash, GEX or Croc, the play environments are attractive, have a style all of their own and are particularly impressive given the size of the sub-levels. In addition, the camera flows pretty evenly behind JD and, for those tight spots, visual questions and problematic enemies, the camera can be manually controlled via the L2 and R2 buttons (similar in execution to the system found in GEX: ETG).

Before we move on to the negative side of the balance sheet, I can't leave the good stuff without mentioning the enemies. There are a number of goof-ball characters that inhabit the night in JD. My favorite, to this point, being the bald dufus guys that inhabit "Greenpark". If you get too close to them, they try to kick you. But, if you lure them into attacking you from a distance, they jump and bounce on their heads toward you — making a classic "uhhee" (dufus sound) as they project themselves at you. A quick sidestep, followed by a zippy turn of the camera and a punch (repeat five times), and the hums go down — fun, challenging and hilarious.

Oh, yeah... one more thing... GREAT MUSIC! OK, now for the problems. JD has a continuing difficulty with camera angles in tight spaces. Tunnels are a particular problem and, no matter how much you move the camera, you will find yourself fighting blindly against the enemy. Despite its high-resolution environment, textures are rough, with no texture-smoothing to be found — giving the game a slightly rough appearance. There are also a number of times in gameplay where it's easy to miss a path or area because there is no look around feature in the camera system. I am not sure that Behavior, the game's developer (formerly Malofilm Interactiv), really believe that there is an exploration element to Jersey Devil — there is.

The final word is that Jersey Devil is a very



enjoyable action/platform title. The graphics can be a little rough at times, the character doesn't really do anything for me, but the variety and depth of gameplay, the gliding mechanics and huge, well-designed environments give you a lot of play time for the buck — a real surprise from SCEA and a recommended purchase for A/P lovers.

Dave

PS THE BOTTOM LINE EXTREME 93%

COMPATIBILITY



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FOX SPORTS SOCCER '99

PUBLISHED BY FOX SPORTS INTERACTIVE — DEVELOPED BY GREMLIN



Fox Sports Interactive enters the very competitive world of video game sports with two titles this month — Fox Sports Golf '99 and Fox Sports Soccer '99. Obviously, Fox has decided to take the cue from the marketing geniuses at EA Sports, as they've one-upped their first titles (ie, "99") just to make sure you know that you're playing games that are ahead of their time (by a year, anyway).

For those of you that are unaware, and are just sleepwalking through life instead of reading PSExtreme diligently every month, it may come as a surprise to learn that the developer for these new sports games is Gremlin, a European company that developed VR Soccer '96 and VR Golf '97 for Interplay. Wow — it is a small world after all (everybody sing-a-long)! Gremlin has been doing some fine games for a long time, dating back to the Amiga some ten or eleven years ago, but their PlayStation titles (Hardcore 4x4, Loaded, the aforementioned sports games) have had mild to little critical or retail success. But, never fear, Fox Sports Interactive is here, and will use their muscle to try and grab a piece of the 5 billion (that's "B", as in Boy howdy) dollar gaming industry. If these first two titles are any indication, it will be a very THIN slice of pie. Of course, the next two games that Fox has lined up are tennis (always a big



seller here in the states — NOT) and an NHL game, which will be going up against the heavy hitters from Sony, Acclaim and EA Sports, and even Virgin and their Powerplay series. Just a thought, but I wouldn't be surprised to see Fox buy that title from Radical Entertainment, and slap the "Fox Sports Interactive" logo on the package. Whoa, there, I've just started my own gossip column in the middle of a review! Actually, THIS is the start of the review — that other stuff was just fodder for those of you that wanted to know! Let me just start this review by stating, for the record, that I haven't reviewed a soccer game since the 16-bit days (where I reviewed every stinkin' one that ever came out), as Zach wanted to be the "soccer guy". Well, now that Garfunkel is gone, me and the newbie (Scott) get the pleasure, although as a favor, I let Scott have the good one!



RATED



FSS (Fox Sports Soccer) '99 doesn't even begin to compare with the FIFA series from EA Sports, and the reasons are plentiful. First of all, the control in this game is just horrid, even with the analog support. Guys continually over-run the ball, and you find yourself doing circles to chase down the offensive player. The computer chooses the closest guy to the ball, and most of the time you're running one way when the computer changes to the other guy, and then that guy runs in the wrong direction because you were pushing in the direction of the other guy! Very sloppy. There's considerable lag time from when you press a button to when something happens on screen. You really have to react a step or two in advance. When passing, I never got a good sense of where the ball was going — it just went, somewhere. When shooting, you hold down the button (however you configure it) and a power meter comes up. If you try and get off a really strong shot, a defensive player will likely come take it away from you, so you can't really hold down the button. There are no juke moves or ball fakes in FSS, whereas you can pull off a variety of different moves in World Cup 98. What few animations there are

occur very slowly, and usually after the play took place. One of my favorite lame-isms is when you control the goalie in a penalty kick situation. You try and dive for a ball shot into the corner, and the goalie just falls over like a big redwood that's just been chopped down! At first, I thought it was just me not knowing how to dive or jump, but the computer looks just as lame as you do! Just sad, sad, sad. There's season play, but no statistics, other than a won-loss record. Who cares? I want to know who's leading the league in scoring, assists, goal saves, and all that kind of stuff. Otherwise, what's the point? And where'd they get these announcers? They're horrible, and add absolutely nothing to the gaming experience.



To be fair, FSS '99 looks pretty good, but there's only one camera angle that works (Touchline). Other than that, there's just not a whole lot in Fox Sports Soccer '99 to get gamers interested. And, certainly not when you stop to think that most soccer fans have already been playing a great game like FIFA: Road to the World Cup, and will soon be able to play World Cup 98. Pass.

Eric

PS THE BOTTOM LINE EXTREME

COMPATIBILITY



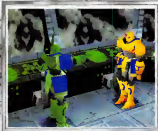
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77%



THE GRANSTREAM SAGA

PUBLISHED BY THQ — DEVELOPED BY SCEJ



I can remember, a few years back, that there was a noticeable lack of RPGs available for the PlayStation and, you, our loyal readers, let us know loud and clear. While it might have taken a little while for Sony to "get it" and start tapping into the huge RPG population readily available in Japan, today there is no such shortage. While not all RPGs can stand up to the quality and high production values of Square's FFVII, most released in the States have plenty of redeeming features — such as THQ's latest acquisition, "The Granstream Saga."

Originally released by Sony Computer Entertainment in Japan, THQ snapped up the US publishing rights to this title and have done an adequate job of localizing the game for American tastes. The story revolves around a young orphaned by the name of Lune, who has been raised by a kindly old man named Valos. One hundred years before, a terrible war had taken place, and a destructive weapon had been used by opposing forces which had catastrophic results. If it wasn't for a group of four Wise Men, the whole world would have been engulfed in water. Foreseeing the cataclysm through their magicks, the Wise Men acted as the continents began to submerge. Using their mystical fortress Arlim, powered by four elemental Orbs, the Wise Men were able to raise four of the world's continents into the air. These four were the only land not swallowed by the ris-

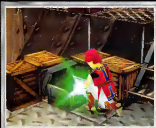


ing oceans. For generations on end, these Wise Men passed down special verses that must be recited in order to keep the continents afloat, but lately there have been rumors spreading rampant of the Wise Men disappearing and the continents themselves slowly sinking lower, closer to the hungry waters waiting below. Somehow, Lune's destiny is connected to these occurrences, and it quickly becomes evident that he is the world's only hope.

The Granstream Saga is truly a unique RPG in that does things quite a bit different than most. The first thing you'll notice is that the game's displayed in polygonal 3D. Not just the fight sequences mind you, everything is — from the towns to the dungeons to the characters you encounter and interact with — all the while running at an amazing 60 frames per second. The second, and most notable feature of Granstream, is the



RATED



battle sequences, which are all fought real-time. There's none of that turn-based, "you slash/they slash" gameplay that is typically found in most role-players. Instead, upon encountering a monster or enemy, your sword comes out and it's up to you, and your skills, to bring the baddie down. When involved in battle, you have the ability to dodge attacks and magic, lunge in and attack, and block with your shield. As you level-up, new attacks and combos become available to you. I found I really liked the real-time fighting, rather than the more traditional pedestrian method of hitting the button when it's my turn up and hoping that I shave off a few hit points. My only complaint is that the enemies regenerate if you leave a room and then return to it. But, I guess that's in order to keep Lune constantly gaining experience points in order to be able to take on the later, tougher enemies.

The storyline and translation was quite good, although it probably won't be winning any drama awards anytime soon. Like most RPGs, Granstream has one big quest and goal to achieve, but there are plenty of objectives to accomplish along the way. The puzzles you'll encounter are of the easy-to-medium range and aren't too taxing on the brain.

Lune comes equipped with a mysterious scepter attached to his arm, which can memorize and imitate certain items and weapons. A lot of the time, when you think you're stuck, try pressing on an object then saying "no" when you're prompted whether or not you want to pick it up. Most times, your scepter will memorize it and you will have it in your inventory — trust me, this works.

In addition to the stylized and unique graphics engine, there are plenty of anime-style, animated cut scenes that help tie together the unfolding storyline. The music is also quite good, ranging from happy-go-lucky to dark and moody, depending on where you're at in the game.

The Granstream Saga is a great RPG offering from THQ. The company has



come back strong on the PlayStation and are quickly becoming known as a player — exploiting the wealth of untapped import PlayStation games available in Japan and giving similar companies, like Working Designs, a run for their money. If you enjoy role playing games, Granstream Saga shouldn't be missed. If you are new to the RPG scene, then this would be a great place to start.

Greg

PS THE BOTTOM LINE EXTREME 92%

COMPATIBILITY



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PS Extreme STRATEGY

Strategy written by Miaka

Published by: Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

Developed by: Polyphony Entertainment



INTRO STRATEGY:

Gran Turismo, arguably the best racing game on any platform, is definitely the deepest racing game on the Playstation with hours upon hours of entertaining and, most certainly, challenging gameplay. With 150-plus tunable cars (150 cars not including the hidden bonus cars like the TRD3000GT) and eight different tracks (11 if you count tracks that are changed by switching sections of the track, 21 including reverse tracks) the possible driving combinations are almost endless.

GENERAL INFO AND STUFF YOU PROBABLY DIDN'T KNOW:

First off, for the curious-minded, here are some changes in the US version vs the Japanese version of the game. When loading up the US version, the most notable difference is the music. In addition, the US version now auto loads the memory card in slot 1. In the Arcade Mode, there is a different selection of initial car manufacturers available, such as Toyota and Subaru, which have been swapped for Chevrolet and Aston Martin. Chrysler Corporation has been renamed "The New Dodge" and Honda was changed to Honda/Acura. The tracks have changed a little in Arcade Mode as well, to make them more fun, one that comes to mind is in Grand Valley right after coming out of the "S" curve (turn two) they added a nice jump. One of the extra cars added to the American GT is the '67 Corvette. You can now also switch between two external camera views and one cockpit view instead of the original one internal and one external perspectives found in the Japanese version (you had to pick your chase view in the options menu). The smoke from car tires that used to cause horrible slow down in the Japanese version has now been optimized so there's minimal slowdown. They did not change the horsepower of the cars from the Japanese to the

US specs, they just converted the cars' power ratings from ps to hp (1ps = 0.9859hp). So a car like the Supra RZ which is 320hp in the US and 280ps in Japan, is 276hp in the US version of Gran Turismo. Although, when you actually buy the car in the game and look at it in your garage, you will notice that the hp is actually rated at 300hp. This is because the law in Japan limits the power of cars to 280ps, so manufacturers must rate their cars modestly. In the Supra RZ's case, a less restrictive exhaust setup and a few other changes bring it up to 320hp in the US, which this game doesn't take into account.

Hopefully in Gran Turismo 2, Poly Entertainment will

"Americanize"

more of the game.

A lot of people will tell you to start off with

FF cars (Front Engine / Front Wheel Drive) or

4WD (All Wheel Drive) cars. We think

instead it's best to go for the gusto, and head

straight for a RWD (Rear Wheel Drive) car. This is

where the fun is at! They are harder to drive, but much

more rewarding because you can get right into practicing your drifting technique (Four Wheel Slide), which is a lot less fun with 4WD or FWD. Although, sooner or later if you plan on completing the game, you will have to learn all of them.

ARCADE MODE

Arche Mode shouldn't provide too much challenge, as long as you research the cars that are available to you. The Dodge Viper GTS is pretty much king for Class A. The Chevrolet Corvette is a good

powerhouse for Class A before you open up Dodge as a manufacturer. The Mitsubishi Eclipse is probably the best Class B car followed by the Toyota Soarer. The Honda Civic Si and Mitsubishi Mirage are good Class C cars. Keep in mind that some of the cars you race are older models that you can't drive in Arcade Mode.



EXTENDING

**BONUS ITEMS:**

To open up items in the Bonus Items Menu, you have to get 1st place using each class of car on a track.

This can be done in Easy Mode for all tracks, but I

recommend doing it in Difficult Mode so you don't have to play through them again to get the other bonuses.

—Winning all three car classes for High

Speed Ring opens up Autumn Ring

—Winning all three car classes for Trial

Mountain opens up Deep Forest

—Winning all three car classes for Grand

Valley East opens up SS R5

—Winning all three car classes for Clubman Stage

5 opens up Grand Valley Speedway

When you place first in all three classes of one of the second groups of tracks, you open up a new manufacturer, starting with Toyota, followed by Subaru, The New Dodge, and TVR respectively.

Beat all the tracks in Normal Mode and you get the ending

cinematic, which you can view at any time by

selecting it in the Bonus Items Menu. Beat all

the tracks in Difficult Mode, and you get Hi-res

GT Mode. Hi-res GT Mode is a higher frame

rate Time Trial version of Clubman Stage Route

5, Special Stage Route 5, and Special Stage

Route 11 with no other cars on the track. It has an incredibly smooth frame rate that must be seen to be believed! It can also be selected in the Bonus Items Menu. Don't forget to save!

**SIMULATION MODE****LICENSES:**

The best thing to do here, if you're having trouble, is to check out the Demonstrations in the Replay Theater. During the Demonstrations you can see a demo of how to get a Gold Trophy that shows speed and shift points.

**B LICENSE:**

License B-1. Mazda Demio GL-X - Time

limit: 0:36 — Start, Accelerate, and Stop.

Part 1 — Get to the 1000m mark as fast

as possible and stop in the goal area.

Accelerate in a straight line from the

starting point and stop completely in the

goal area. Use the big trees on the side of the road as a reference point for using the brake. Don't use the hand brake because you'll just slide and waste time.

License B-2. Mitsubishi GTO

Twin Turbo - Time limit: 0:27

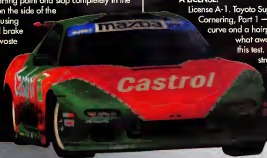
— Start, Accelerate, and

Stop, Part 2 — Get to the

1000m mark as fast as

possible and stop in the goal

area. Since the car is heavier



and more powerful, you'll need to brake earlier. Use the 900m mark as a reference point for using the brake.

License B-3. Honda Del Sol '93 S - Time limit:

0:29 — Basic Cornering, Part 1 — This

is probably the hardest test of the B

licenses. Try to take the turn using the

outside of the track, coming

across the inside of

the apex, and back

to the outside of

the track while

maintaining as

much speed as

you can. If you

course-out, it's

instant disquali-

fication. This is one

where watching the

Demonstration in the

Replay Theater will really help.

License B-4. Nissan S14 Silvia K's - Time limit: 0:26 — Basic

Cornering, Part 2 — This is the same as B-3 except with a more

powerful car. The key is cornering smoothly. Again, going out of the

course will result in instant disqualification.

License B-5. Mitsubishi GTO Twin Turbo - Time limit: 0:25 — Basic

Cornering, Part 3 — This is the same as B-3 and B-4 except with an

even more powerful car. You know the drill.

License B-6. Mitsubishi FTO GP version R - Time limit: 0:28 —

Complex Cornering, Part 1 — Accelerating from the starting point,

you will encounter an "S" curve which you have to navigate

smoothly. Going out of the course will disqualify you immediately.

You will be using the FWD FTO.

License B-7. Nissan S14 Silvia K's - Time limit: 0:27 — Complex

Cornering, Part 2 — Again, you have to do the same as B-6, but

with the RWD Silvia.

License B-8. Mazda Roadster V Special - Time limit 1:22 — License

Examination — Here you just take one lap around High Speed Ring

as fast as possible, no sweat.

Receive all Gold Trophies and you win the Chrysler Concept Car/Copperhead.

A LICENSE:

License A-1. Toyota Supra - Time limit 0:34 — Practical

Cornering, Part 1 — A simple

curve and a hairpin turn is

what awaits you for

this test. Note, the

straightaway

is longer

than in previous tests, making

your entrance speed into the turn

higher.

License A-2. Toyota Supra RZ -

Time limit: 0:26 — Practical



Cornering, Part 2 — A small "S" curve to a long straightaway into a hairpin turn. Again, be aware that the straight is longer than previous tests; watch your speed when entering the turn.

License A-3. Mazda RX7 Type RZ - Time limit: 0:44 — Practical Cornering, Part 3 — Accelerate through the long straight, and turn tightly through the first corner. Watch your car through the first corner as it tends to be a little unstable when braking.

License A-4. Nissan Skyline R33GT-R - Time limit: 0:39 — Complex Cornering, Part 1 — This test has you attempting to handle multiple corners efficiently. The key is to not slow down unnecessarily, while maintaining the average speed of the whole stretch of road.

License A-5. Honda Prelude Type SH - Time limit: 0:32 — Complex Cornering, Part 2 — Again, you have to handle multiple corners which include a high-speed left-to-right "S" curve. It's vital to keep the exit speed up, coming out of the last tight left turn and, if you touch a wall, precious seconds will be lost resulting in a failure.

License A-6. Toyota MR2 GTS - Time limit: 0:27 — Complex Cornering, Part 3 — Prepare to go through a complex set of corners after initially accelerating. Again, beware when braking while turning left for the first, tight right-turn, and be sure to keep the line smooth.

License A-7. Subaru Impreza '96SD Still - Time limit: 0:33 — Special Technique — This test is basically non-stop drifting around a 100 meter circle for five laps. You need to turn quickly, without spinning out, using the drift technique. Although, it's possible to just use the brake instead.

License A-8. Toyota Supra RZ - Time limit: 1:05 — License Examination — This is basically the first two high speed turns from the Grand Valley track and one of the most difficult tests you'll encounter: Start, turn right through the first corner, go through the high-speed straightaway, another right, a hairpin, then finish... Whew!



Receive all Gold Trophies and you win the Toyota TRD3000GT (This is a Silver Supra with a TRD body-kit — not to be confused with the Mitsubishi 3000GT in the States).

INTERNATIONAL LICENSE:

License IA-1. TVR Griffith 4.0 - Time limit: 1:07 — High Speed Ring Time Trial — Start from a standstill and make the one time lap prerequisite. Since it's a full course time attack, it will require every technique you've learned.

License IA-2. Dodge Viper GTS - Time limit: 1:30 — SS Route 5 Time Trial

— Again start from a standstill and make the one lap time prerequisite, using every mastered technique.

License IA-3. TVR Griffith 4.0 - Time limit 2:03 — Grand Valley Time Trial — Yet again the objective is to beat the clock, this time on the Grand Valley Track. Use all of the skills you've learned.

License IA-4. Dodge Viper GTS

- Time limit: 1:24 — Deep Forest Time Trial — Ok, we know this is getting repetitive. Start from a standstill and beat the lap time on the Deep Forest Track... Go to it!

License AI-5. TVR Griffith 4.0 - Time limit: 1:24 — Autumn Ring Time Trial — Run the Autumn Ring track from start to finish in the allotted amount of time.

License AI-6. Dodge Viper GTS - Time limit: 1:33 — Trial Mountain Time Trial — Run the Trial Mountain track from start to finish in the allotted amount of time.



License AI-7. TVR Griffith 4.0 - Time limit: 2:14 — SS Route 11 Time Trial

— Once more, start from a standstill and run the track in the prerequisite time. This track is pretty long and complex, so it will take more than a few failures just to get to know its twists and turns.

License AI-8. Dodge Viper GTS - Time limit: 1:59 — International License Examination — Basically, this is the Grand Valley track run backwards. It's another time trial test, re-learn the track backwards and apply all of your new-found techniques.

Receive all Gold Trophies and you win the Nissan Nismo 400R (Skyline)

TUNING STRATEGIES:

This is more for the Machine Test part of the game than the actual

EXAMINE

competition port although the knowledge can be carried over to racing. One thing you might want to do is write down the base gear ratios before changing any of them, since there is no restore to default command. You will have to reload your settings if you forget the base ratios and want them back.

For the 0-400 Test, the Skyline GT-R Vspec rules! Changing the Aerodynamics downforce to maximum will help you get lower times. Spring Rate, Ride Height, Damper, and Stabilizer settings seem to provide no effect on times, even when mixed at different extremes. If



you think you notice a change in your time, try using the auto and doing the run twice with the same ports. You should see some time difference. Most of it seems to come down to if you get a

good launch. The thing that will make a big change in your times is playing with the Gear Ratios. Using a Nissan Skyline GT-R Vspec with all the most expensive ports and down force set to maximum should give you a place to start in the 8.2 times:

1st 3.4
2nd 2.15
3rd 1.5
4th 1.1
5th .83
Final 4.2

For the 0-1000 Test you should keep pretty much the same settings as the 0-400 Test except change your Gear Ratios. These ratios should give you a place to start in the 15.0 times:

1st 3.15
2nd 1.8
3rd 1.28
4th .95
5th .68
Final 4.15

For the Max Speed Test, you should switch to a car that has six gears, like the Dodge Viper GTS, Toyota Supra RZ, or Mitsubishi GTO Twin Turbo. Minimize Spring Rate, Damper, Ride Height and Maximize all other Suspension settings. Put the Aerodynamics setting at minimum, unlike for the other two tests but, again, change the Gear Ratios. For the Supra RZ the following gear ratios should put you at 260mph+:

1st 3.827
2nd 2.36

3rd 1.685
4th 1.23
5th .99
6th .65
Final 3.266

If you want to go even faster, it's possible to cheat by adjusting the gears and driving the course backward until you think you have gone as fast as the car can go. All the above gear ratios are by no means "the best," they are just a good starting point to getting the best scores possible.

RACING STRATEGIES:

Good used cars to start off the Simulation Mode with are the Nissan Skyline GTS25 Type S, Mazda Rx-7 GT-X, and Honda Prelude 94 VTEC. The ideal hp figure seems to be right around 600hp. Sure, you can bring your Skyline GT-R or Supra RZ up to 900+hp, but it's pretty much unnecessary except for the Machine Tests. The car settings do not need to be messed with in Simulation Mode to win, but we strangely

recommend it for the fun of it. Here are a few warnings: Grand Valley 300 is about an hour and 45 minutes long and the last two Special Stage Route 11 courses are about 45 minutes each. There's not much help to give after this point, almost anything you can think of is covered either in the manual or in the game itself. We do strongly suggest reading the reference manual on driving techniques. This is good stuff that applies to driving real cars.





TAIL CONCERTO

BAN DAI JAPAN



Ban Dai's "Tail Concerto" has been on import store shelves for the better of a month and, consequently, has eaten up quite a bit of my free time during that period.

While I consider myself pretty much a hard-core

gamer, there are some import games that even I usually won't go near. These are typically of the RPG variety and, in most cases, are so heavily riddled with Japanese text that it's almost impossible to squeeze any enjoyment out of them at all. Luckily, Tail Concerto is an action/RPG with the emphasis on action and does not fall anywhere near that category.

While I'm not able to interpret the storyline for you, (I went the Spanish route in high school and college — who knew?) I was able to figure out that it revolves around this cartoony, rookie cat-cop who rides around in an air balloon for a police vehicle. It seems that his services are required throughout a world of floating continents which, most of the time, require him to hop into this crazy mecha-robot-thingly with extra-long, multi-jointed arms and chase down, then scoop up mischievous, bomb-throwing kittens. Whacky as this sounds, the concept's really cool and works quite well within the realms of the play mechanics.

The environments in Tail Concerto are represented in some of the best use of 3D polygons I've ever seen. More than a few of the Dimension Publishing employ-



EXPORT



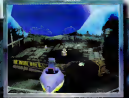
ees walked by the monitor as the game was playing and asked if it was an N64 game. The whole game is played out in free-roaming, go-anywhere 3D environments, a la Mario 64, although, if I was going to compare the game to another, it would be *Zelda*.

When strapped into your robot, your character has the ability to run, jump, momentarily hover by flapping its arms, aim and shoot bubbles, scoop up and throw bombs, climb and shimmy up certain pipes and poles, grapple, and, in one particular level, temporarily fly with addition of a jet-pack strapped to its back. There's even a very cool, 3D mine cart sequence later on in the game.

The basic gist of TC has you going around clearing each level of the mischievous Kittens, talking to everyone in sight, then heading to your map screen and choosing your next destination. There are plenty of action/platform experiences to be had, similar to that of *Crash Bandicoot*, where you'll be navigating hazardous trap-filled cat-walks, jumping red hot pipes, dealing with conveyor belts and making leaps of faith. And of course, every so often, you'll have to fight the prerequisite bomb-spewing, missile-toting Mecha-Cat boss.

Throw in some high-quality anime cut-scenes and you've got one helluva import game. While there's no official word if Ban Dai will be releasing this game in the States, I wouldn't be too surprised if you see Tail Concerto show up here sometime around Christmas.

Greg



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7. Restrictions: Void where prohibited or restricted by law.



EXCAVATE is the section where we dig up the last six months of our old ratings and present them on one easy-to-read page, along with a little explanation/breakdown of our rating system. Use this as your buying guide throughout the year and as a reference for those older games that you might have missed (or wish you had).

GOLD AWARDS	ISSUE	RATING
Tekken 3	May 1998	97%
Blasto	May 1998	96%
Reboot	April 1998	96%
NCAA Gamebreaker 96	January 1998	96%
Critical Depth	January 1998	96%
MLB 98	June 1998	96%
FIFA 98	February 1998	94%
NBA Shootout 96	April 1998	94%
Finlander	May 1998	94%
Need for Speed III: Hot Pursuit	May 1998	93%
Bloody Rose	March 1998	93%
Tomb Raider	May 1996	93%
Hot Shots Golf	April 1998	92%
VR Baseball 99	June 1998	92%
Cardinal Svn	June 1998	92%
Forsaken	June 1995	91%
Broken Sword	February 1998	90%
Alundra	February 1998	90%
Command & Conquer: Red Alert	February 1998	90%

WCW Nitro	February 1996	67%
Triple Play '99	April 1996	66%
Auto Destruct	February 1996	66%
AGT Midway Collection 2	January 1998	66%
Nagano Winter Olympics '98	February 1998	66%
Double	May 1996	65%
Skull Monkeys	March 1998	65%
Monopoly	February 1996	65%
Klonka	March 1996	64%
Intelligent Cube	January 1998	63%
NBA in the Zone '98	February 1998	63%
Monster Rancher	January 1998	62%
Frogger	January 1998	62%
Masters of Terria Kishi	January 1998	62%
Neuman/Haas Racing	March 1996	61%
VR Powerboat Racing	April 1996	61%
Duke Nukem: Total Meltdown	February 1998	60%
Point Blank	January 1998	60%

TIN GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Beast Wars	March 1998	69%
X-MEN: Children of the Atom	April	69%
Judge Dredd	May 1998	68%
Spawn	January 1998	68%
Bug Riders	January 1998	67%
Punley Saurik	January 1998	60%

The games are to be avoided at all costs. Only die-hard fans would buy them.

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Sony	2, 3, 5, 9, 18, 19, 27, 60, 61
Tecmo	54
The 3DO Co.	50, 61
THQ	17
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